

NEW AGE OFFICES

Coffeeshops & Hangouts

These workplaces come equipped with coffeeshops to aid the perfect brainstorming session

Networking & Connecting

One can network with people from across platforms, making it an ideal learning space

Work Like a Pro

With an eclectic atmosphere encouraging stress-free working, one can get more done

WORKING IN WONDERLAND

Over 13 million people in India will work out of co-working spaces by 2020. The sector, which has been witnessing an upward trajectory for the last couple of years, is all set to boom. With real estate prices escalating, and Startup India becoming the new war cry, entrepreneurs are looking at these setups as the perfect answer.
by Medha Dutta

Heavy Petting

Bringing your pets to office makes work a more enjoyable experience

Recreational Spaces

Unwind with some in-house or even outdoor games that will help rejuvenate your mind

Stroll into Hauz Khas Social, Delhi; Smart Labs in Lower Parel, Mumbai; 91Springboard at Koramangala, Bengaluru; or Artisans Lab in Mylapore, Chennai; and you will be greeted with the sight of serious looking, mostly young people absorbed in various tasks—sometimes in the open and sometimes inside what Smartworks call Smart Cubes, sipping cappuccino or mint tea, maybe a cooler, or munching on a baguette, diligently tapping away on their laptops or digital drawing tablets. Some of them may be conferencing with clients or team members in far flung cities or even countries. Welcome to the New Age Workplace. Today, 'going to work' is a whole new gig, and the office is not necessarily a brick and mortar entity.

Fewer employees now think of work as a job to be done within the traditional confines of a brick and mortar office. To make work a more easy and relaxing (yes, you heard that right) experience for the employee and maximise their output, many companies are opting for co-working places while revamping their offices. It also saves money like establishment costs and cuts down on support staff.

With escalating rental costs, mostly in the metros, and a reducing workforce—thanks to more technology orientation—it is making sense for companies to hire a ready setup without bothering about overhead costs. In the last two years, the co-working sector has undergone a boom and human resource experts predict there is more to come in the next few years.

According to a study conducted by JLL, India's

largest professional real estate services company, over 13 million people will work out of co-working spaces by 2020. In the recently released research report 'Spotting the Opportunities: Flexible Space in the Asia Pacific', the company says demand for flexible offices in India is expected to grow at 40-50 percent in 2018 alone. The report further indicates that the top six cities will require an estimated five million seats in co-working spaces, while over eight million of the projected demand will be in tier-II and tier-III cities.

Graphic artist Ananya Mohanti says she finds working at the Hauz Khas Social convivial. "The atmosphere keeps my creative juices flowing. I can be myself. I don't have to adhere to a fixed time table. I can also take breaks from work and take a walk around Hauz Khas Village when I feel that I'm stuck in a rut," she says.

Co-working spaces come with multiple welfare options ranging from creche service to relaxation rooms for expecting mothers, women on their periods or period leave,

cupboards, scanners, high speed WiFi and Mail Box Services. Cobalt BFI in Bengaluru has a special hall called "quiet space" with individual work stations and private desks and a private office for a team of six. Startups, techies, freelance entrepreneurs and artists are the main clients. The office environment is suddenly no longer a boring place. Ashish Khandelwal, employed by a startup using a co-working space in Gurgaon, says, "Coming to work is now fun and exciting. You never know what to expect. There are no constraints about dress, so you are yourself, and end up giving your best. These workplaces break the age old perception that offices are dull and lifeless areas which suck the life out of employees, leaving them drained, exhausted, and stressed."

Thanks to such an informal work environment, where the employee or entrepreneur is more in control of their time and life, spending more time on campus is inevitable. And as employees get used to such a work culture, they are expected to be more productive and

efficient, thus adding to the company's growth curve. With co-working being the buzzword, hotels and cafes have cottoned on to the fact that offering office space as part of their facilities is profitable. With stylish, relaxed environments fitted out with high-tech, connected equipment, and lively meeting places, these work places have evolved into sought-after offices. Of course, no one is complaining about the service on call! Most modern cafes immediately connect consumers to their free WiFi, and no waiter or manager will bother you if you are parked for hours on end with a French Press and a laptop to keep you company.

Says Sailesh Awasthi, who works as a freelance editor in Delhi, "Working from home is difficult and distracting. Someone is always ringing the doorbell, friends drop in, or there are chores to be done. Working out of a coffee shop is much cooler."

Little wonder that new age offices and co-working places are changing the work ethic.



“We are firm believers in the idea that work should be fun because it enhances creativity and productivity. We are building a frustration zone to help members vent their stress in a soundproof room.”

SUDEEP SINGH, Chief Evangelist & Co-founder, GoWork



“We believe that the spaces we are building thrive on a sense of community. Members attend events, they form sports teams, they plan weekend trips, and they interact with people they never would have met.”

PRANAY GUPTA, Co-founder, 91springboard



“Our spaces have high-speed fibre lease lines, security, tea/coffee, etc. It's a plug-and-play setup allowing young startups, entrepreneurs and SMEs to have a ready-to-move-in office space.”

YATIN K THAKUR, Founder, CoworkIn

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So, what exactly is co-working? Simply put, it is a joint working space in a building where different companies or individuals can hire the amount or kind of space and infrastructure they need. They also work under one roof. To push up rentals, these co-working spaces provide the best office equipment and amenities to clients.

Says Yatin K Thakur, founder of CoworkIn that specialises in providing the most affordable co-working space around Delhi NCR, “We provide facilities such as shared desks, private offices, meeting rooms, events area, calling rooms and a virtual office address. Our spaces have high-speed fibre lease lines, security, tea/coffee, and printing facility. It's a plug-and-play setup allowing young startups, entrepreneurs

and SMEs to have a ready-to-move-in office space.” CoworkIn currently operates in seven locations across Delhi NCR with about 550 seats and 650 members using its facilities on a daily basis. It has given birth to many successful ventures in India such as Oyo Rooms and UrbanClap. Over the last six years, they have hosted clients such as Jaguar Land Rover, Techstars Startup Weekend, Practo, Quikr, Zyduz Healthcare and many more. Their current client list includes cardekho.com, Zerodha, Share Khan, Asha Impact, sports fan engagement startup Rooter, Transfin, Lexingenious, Picasso Animation studio and many more.

As career options have multiplied in cities and with startups vying for attention, today's young workforce includes advertisement and PR professionals, independent filmmakers and camerapersons,

artists and freelance collaborators and lifestyle coaches and strategists. Their office is in their minds and iPads.

Sudeep Singh, chief evangelist and co-founder, GoWork, the world's largest co-collaborative co-working space which has a setup in Gurgaon, says, “Here we are firm believers that work should be fun because it enhances creativity and productivity. Currently, our campus has comprehensive facilities and spaces for cricket, badminton and basketball, and we also organise sports tournaments among the companies working in our campus to encourage good-spirited competition and interaction. We also have a fully-fitted state-of-the-art gymnasium, and hold stand-up comedy sessions and motivational talks every Friday.”

GoWork is also in the process of procuring urban sleeping pods with built-in TVs for

employees looking for some quick relaxation. “We are building a frustration zone to help members vent their stress in a soundproof room, where one can even use a hammer to break a vintage car. We are also mulling setting up a premium bar and lounge area to serve the best collection of spirits from around the world—post work hours, of course.” GoWork's current clientele includes Zomato, Paytm, FlyingFur, Impactify, Lifelog, Fixoo, etc.

It's not just hammers and stand-up comedy that attract customers. Imagine getting hot water bottles for your aches and sprains, besides wellness sessions such as pilates or yoga classes in association with the Art of Living—GoWork is making sure that how you view work undergoes a radical change. “A nutritionist on our staff also ensures that the food we provide is healthy and boosts energy to keep the members active. We serve herbal detox water to help professionals beat the heat. We also provide special wellness sessions for expectant mothers, as well as specially-crafted chairs to help them stay seated for long periods of time,” says Singh.

Other co-working companies such as WeWork, Innov8, etc, are working on offering the

form sports teams, plan weekend trips, and interact with people they never would have met had they been working out of isolated offices. Our community has cultural events, cricket matches, weekend trips, foosball and table tennis. We have Friday night unwinds with our members, who also do stand-up or music performances.”

In an internal survey conducted among 91springboard members, 60 per cent said they spent about 30-90 minutes a day travelling for health and wellbeing purposes, going to gyms, yoga classes and fitness centres. With health activities like yoga and outdoor programmes in place, 86 per cent of workers believed that joining the 91springboard community had helped them grow their businesses. There is also a dedicated ‘chill-zone’ in each of hubs as well as a sort of book corner where members can take Me-Time

the infrastructure is provided by an outside party, we save on overhead costs. With a variety of benefits available on campus, our employees are a happy lot.”

New age workplaces believe that work should not be a place people try to escape from. From large MNCs to bootstrapped startups, many organisations around the world are gradually waking up to the

ticketing startup. Setting up a traditional office was out of question what with the finances involved. Besides, we would have had to arrange for the infrastructure and maintain it. Going to work is so much fun now. In fact, at home things look a bit staid.”

With the mindsets of the young urban workforce changing, companies have geared up to retain and recruit



PARVEEN NEGI



SHEKHAR YADAV

Conferences & Meetings
Even the boring of team meeting can turn out to be fun and peppy, thanks to the environment

Post-work Sessions
Hook up with colleagues for a drink or indulge in some quality banter after the day's work

Shared Office Space Etiquette

DON'T LEAVE ANY TRACES: Try to leave the work space as if nobody used it. Organising, wiping surfaces and other small tasks make a huge difference.

KEEP A QUIET PHONE VOICE: It is important to keep the place quiet. This ensures that other

workers can hear their clients on their phones.

GET YOUR OWN SUPPLIES: Ask for common supplies only if there is an emergency. And in case someone loans you supplies, return or replace them.

MAKE CONNECTIONS:

This is probably the biggest benefit of shared working spaces. By reaching out to other renters or co-workers, and getting to know them and what they do, you can gain professionally.

PRACTICE COURTEOUS EATING: If you eat at the office, choose mild foods

that do not have strong odours. Also, remember to throw away your trash after you have finished eating.

REPLACE USED THINGS: From refilling the paper in the printer when the tray is empty to brewing a fresh pot of coffee, lend a hand when you

think something in the office is over.

DON'T OVERSTEP YOUR BOUNDARY: When people rent office space in shared workplace, they usually have permission for certain areas. Make sure you are within that boundary and do not use extra unauthorised space.

very best from an array of lifestyle requirements. Be it Arabic coffee, or four-legged, furry ‘Chief Happiness Officers’, it is Disneyland for the serious professional.

Says Pranay Gupta, co-founder of 91springboard, India's largest co-working community that has presence in Bengaluru, Mumbai, New Delhi, Navi Mumbai, Hyderabad, Gurgaon, Noida, and Goa, and serves more than 2,500 clients: “We're more than a co-working office space. We function on a community-based approach and believe that the spaces we're building thrive on a sense of community. Members attend events and workshops, they

off to take a nap or curl up and read a good book.

International platforms such as Hyphen Mark Inc, Kai OS Technologies, TechFin Solutions FZCO, WunderCar Mobility Solutions, Adaptive System, and many more are part of 91springboard. The community is also looking at launching new hubs in Pune, Jhandewala (Delhi), and Mumbai.

Preetha K, senior welfare officer at an MNC that has rented a place in one of the co-working facilities in Mumbai, says, “We are a very small team. Most of the rest are in Singapore. We didn't need a huge office space. Since

numerous advantages of co-working spaces. From reduced overhead costs, fewer HR hassles to sustained employee happiness, co-working spaces are ideal for psychological wellbeing of employees. Furthermore, the emergence of big brands in the Indian market is pushing up the demand for co-working spaces as these organisations are eyeing tier-II and III cities as potential markets. Co-working spaces give them the luxury of a pre-set office with the necessary infrastructure.

Says Mayukh Jayasimha, who has just set foot into such a world with his startup, “We are three people working at my

talent while keeping the growth chart and bottom lines growing. A happy worker is a productive worker, goes the management maxim. Many workplaces are now going the extra mile to offer their employees free spa visits, gyms on campus, free food and healthy food options, sponsored tours, student loan repayment assistance, classes in meditation and access to nutritionists and trainers.

Many new managers have worked abroad and young inheritors have studied at premium business schools overseas. By bringing in an open office culture and flexible work hours, the new Indian office is a welcome change.