Why coffee shops are the new office
Public Sector: Doing more with less

When hi-tech gets tactile:
The QuantumBlack Client Lounge
Q&A Profile: In conversation with David Marks
Welcome to the third issue of CREATE, the magazine from Spaceoasis® that brings you ideas and inspiration to help you create amazing workspaces.

When you’re investing in your workspace, flexibility is key. If a space can be reconfigured, accommodate multiple uses and change to suit your needs without needing to knock down (or install) walls, you reduce the risk, and cost, of getting it wrong. Whether you’re trying to reduce costs, juggle the accommodation of a growing team or create an environment that will adapt to a rapidly changing working world, flexibility is always the answer.

With cuts continuing, the need for public sector organisations to extract more value from their workspace is greater than ever before. So, what if you could reduce your space requirement while maintaining headcount? We suggest some ideas on how to make this happen on page C10.

People using coffee shops as an office is a trend that shows no signs of slowing and there is evidence to suggest that it’s actually quite a productive environment in which to work. What’s the appeal and would replicating the latte vibe in your workspace be a good idea? Grab a cappuccino and head to page C06 to find out.

We’re delighted that David Marks, co-founder of Marks Barfield Architects, designers of the London Eye and the i360, joins us on page C18 to share his thoughts on the London skyline, why ‘long life, loose fit’ is still relevant today and why he’s a fan of writable walls. Another fan of writable walls is architect and graphic facilitator Giuseppe Boscherini, who designed the Client Lounge at Quantum Black’s London HQ (see pC16 to read about this ultra-flexible, highly sophisticated space); read his advice on how to accommodate millennials and why you need to be cautious with hot desks on page C14.

Find out how IT security firm Sophos, transformed its secure demonstration area on page C20 and how acoustic screens and pods are helping Telford-based HowToMoodle by providing a flexible solution to accommodating the company’s growing team on page C12. Finally, What’s Hot is on page C04 for a look at latest workspace trends.

Enjoy!
WHAT’S HOT

WORKING ENVIRONMENTS

Ideas and inspiration from workspaces up and down the country.

01 Team effort
Open plan collaborative zones with large scale whiteboards and a variety of places to sit (or stand) and work with colleagues are gaining popularity. Millennials especially are looking for a social way of working with and learning from colleagues and offering a variety of places to work stimulates productivity and strengthens cross-company networks.

02 Graphic detail
Clever wall graphics that incorporate utilitarian devices as part of your design theme lend a humorous and human feel to your space. We’ve seen fire extinguishers as scuba tanks on the back of divers, fire bells as headphones and cables creating skylines. Genius.

03 Sign of the times
Emojis and iconography mean words aren’t always necessary, and designers are taking full advantage when creating signage. Take the iPhone key pad for example, etched on a glass door it denotes entry to a room where you can go and make calls, whereas a finger on lips shows it’s a quiet area. It’s a great way of overcoming language barriers.

04 Office plants 2.0
Our response to nature is innate; being outside in green spaces enjoying fresh air makes us feel relaxed and rejuvenated. While offices in the middle of forests aren’t a practical solution, bringing the outside in can work wonders. Living walls bring stunning, lush green displays into the workspace while purifying the air. It’s a very long way from the dusty yukka plant of old...

05 On trend
Discover the key trends that are inspiring commercial interiors. Global textile innovator Camira has launched its second trend forecast, Evolution: Global Trend Directions 2017/18. The driving theme of this report is Evolution, a celebration of now and how we have developed to be such a unique and complex species. The report guides readers through each trend - Quest, Visionary, Habitat and Co-Create - each with a thoughtful colour palette of fabrics, colour combinations to create new moods and dynamic keywords to capture the sentiment of each trend.

Visit camirafabrics.com/trends to request your copy.

06 Proud of your roots
Bold graphics and visual displays that reflect your setting give a unique identity to your work place. Whether it’s hi-tech LEDs in the hipster-haven of Silicon Roundabout, the illustrious industry of the factory skyline in Manchester or the Iron Bridge in Telford, demonstrating pride in your heritage creates a sense of ownership and a proud connection to your location.
Why do so many people use coffee shops as an office?

WHAT’S THE APPEAL
and how can you replicate it BACK AT THE OFFICE?

Walk into any coffee shop and you’ll inevitably see rows of people sitting in front of laptops working. Freelancers (of which there are now 1.9 million in the UK) plus home workers trying to avoid the distractions of laundry and Netflix have created a sustained trend that shows no signs of slowing. Apart from the obvious attraction of good coffee and cake, what is it about coffee shops that makes them such popular places to work? Is it mandatory to work on a Macbook? And if you and your colleagues are office-based, how can you recreate the coffee shop atmosphere in your workplace? »
The concept of working in coffee shops isn’t new. In the 17th century there were more than 80 coffee houses in the City of London, each of which was a centre of specific mercantile or entrepreneurial expertise. In the late 1600s Edward Lloyd’s coffee shop was the place to go for marine information and later insurance; from these humble beginnings the venerable insurance legend that is Lloyds of London began.

The Third Space
A few centuries later, when Starbucks landed on our shores in the 1990s they brought with them the concept of the ‘third space’. Not work, not home, but somewhere comfortable in between. It’s a concept that has barely changed, apart from the addition of wifi, and has since been emulated by its many successors. The soft furnishings provide behavioural cues that this is somewhere relaxing, while the buzz of commerce creates a stimulating environment that suits both social and business encounters. We think and feel differently when we’re in a coffee shop environment rather than an office; it’s less formal, we can be ourselves and it feels more fun.

From a furniture standpoint, it’s a blend of natural finishes (wooden tables and chairs) and soft seating which offers variety and good acoustics plus lighting that would be equally at home in your home. It’s easy enough to replicate in an office situation but be sure to include soft finishes and fabric to dampen sound.

Noises on
Although this might be slightly counterintuitive, it’s partly the noise that attracts people to working in coffee shops. The study ‘Is Noise Always Bad?’ published in the Journal of Consumer Research suggests that an ambient noise level of 70db enhances performance on creative tasks. Perhaps because we are essentially social beings, we like being surrounded by the hubbub of others, without actually having to talk to, or be interrupted by, them. The low level hum creates a purposeful atmosphere rather than the soporific peace of a study or a deathly quiet office where you feel self-conscious making or taking a phone call. If you can’t make it out to a coffee shop there’s an app, Coffitivity, that will play you the sounds of a coffee shop (choices include Morning Murmur, Lunchtime Lounge or you can upgrade to premium and enjoy Texas Teahouse or Brazil Bistro) so you can enjoy the café atmosphere from the comfort of your home or desk. Yes, really.

At work, you might already have quiet zones for focused work, but do you have a loud zone where people can chat, take and make calls? If you can’t stretch to a barista and coffee cart for the authentic hiss and bubble, having a kitchen area with kettle and coffee machine could work almost as well.

Variety is the spice...
Another reason people populate coffee shops is for a change of scene. Boredom is the enemy of both creativity and productivity; staring at the same four walls all day every day is a direct route to tediumsville. Switching around your work locale also introduces variety in the people you see, so you get to develop networks beyond your immediate neighbours (be they desk neighbours or the people next door). You never know who you’ll bump into or what they could connect you to.

Offering a variety of spaces to work prevents ennui from setting in, and with pods, booths and touch downs it’s not difficult to do. Failing that, just make sure your office is near a coffee shop and drop in when you need some ambient noise and caffeine-driven inspiration. Macbook optional.
**CUT COSTS BY REDUCING SPACE, NOT HEADCOUNT**

**HOW A MORE FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO OFFICE SPACE COULD REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF SPACE YOU NEED.**

As we enter the second half of a decade of austerity, organisations across the public sector remain under pressure to drive down costs. With the Chancellor’s request that the government ‘do more with less’, cuts to public services continue and councils and publicly funded bodies are expected to pull rabbits out of hats to produce significant cost savings.

After the cost of hiring people, office space is the largest outgoing for most organisations so space efficiency is paramount. It’s a no-brainer that retaining people makes more sense than retaining space; people get the work done while space just costs money. So what if you could cut costs by reducing your space while maintaining your headcount?

Reconfiguring your existing space to create a more flexible working environment could enable you to do more with less. Here are five ways you could make your space work harder while improving your working environment.

**01 EXCHANGE SOME OF YOUR MEETING ROOMS FOR PODS**

Meeting rooms that sit empty for part of the day are an inefficient use of space. Most meetings can be held in soft seating areas or pods that can also be used for working and collaborating. Soft seating areas and large pods are great for social interaction, while individual booths can provide a place for focused, uninterrupted work. A more fluid approach to meeting spaces also makes it easier to have a quick catch up straightaway rather than waiting to book a room, which is a more efficient use of time as well as space.

**02 DITCH THE KITCHEN**

Install a kitchen pod with neatly integrated plumbing, power and a fridge that does everything a staff kitchen needs to do while taking up far less space. Awkward or dark corners that would be unsuitable for a work area can work brilliantly here. Similarly, pods can take the place of print and post rooms, so you can lose all those tiny rooms that take up masses of space and house all the kit behind sleek, smart screens.

**03 BIN FLIPCHARTS FOR WHITEBOARD WALLS**

Flipchart pads are expensive, and flipchart stands take up space while really only providing a limited canvas for your thoughts and ideas. More importantly, whiteboard walls enable you to hold meetings and brainstorming sessions wherever they are installed, making meetings more interactive and stimulating in varied locations. Whiteboard walls encourage collaboration and give you more space to express and develop your ideas and plans. They also score on the environmental side of things as you won’t be using up endless sheets of paper.

**04 SWAP HOTDESKS FOR TOUCHDOWNS**

Unused desks are a waste of space. If you have workers that are only in the office for part of the day, install touchdowns around your meeting pods where they can plug in their laptop and work for a few hours. Install lockers so they have somewhere to store their things. Alternatively they can make use of empty meeting spaces and individual pods and booths. If you really can’t let go of their desks altogether, explore more compact alternatives.

**05 INCORPORATE FLEXIBLE SPACES**

Creating non-prescriptive, flexible spaces that can be used for meetings, social interaction, team collaboration or individual work means your space can adapt to the evolving demands of your workforce. Technology is radically changing the way we work; we no longer need to be tethered to our desk working at a PC and sometimes we don’t even need to be in the office. This presents a unique opportunity to free up and change the way we use office space. Keeping it flexible and agile will put you in a better position to respond to change.
Established in 2004, HowToMoodle is experiencing rapid growth as more and more organisations embrace its highly effective e-learning platform support services.

Located in the E-Innovation Centre (EIC) on Wolverhampton University’s buzzing Telford campus, the HowToMoodle team enjoys being part of a diverse collection of entrepreneurial businesses that share its modern building.

With the HowToMoodle team growing fast, the company was looking for ways to reconfigure its office space while softening the acoustics, enabling more people to be accommodated comfortably in the same space. Director Jan Lawrence saw the Spaceoasis® pods in meeting area of the shared breakout space in the EIC and noticed how they offered privacy while deadening sound. Thinking they could work for HowToMoodle, she called in Spaceoasis® to assess the situation and suggest a solution.

Spaceoasis® installed a Huddle meeting pod to provide an acoustically insulated area for meetings and a Morse resource pod to house a kitchen area complete with full-size fridge. Agile® screens with acoustic pads were placed around the office to divide the space and provide privacy for phone calls and focused work, while absorbing sound. The screens can easily be moved around to create different spaces as the company grows. Upholstered with fabrics in HowToMoodle’s corporate colours, the pods and screens give the office a vibrant feel while achieving their mission of deadening sound and improving the office acoustics.

HowToMoodle Director, Jan Lawrence, comments, "We were considering installing partition walls but they are very expensive and they'd be left behind if we outgrow this space, so it didn't feel like a wise investment. What's brilliant about the Spaceoasis® pods is not only can we reposition them when we reconfigure our office space, which we've just done to accommodate more desks, we can also take them with us if we ever have to move. They are heavy, but when they're in place they feel very robust and solid. "The atmosphere in the office is so much better now. You can still hear people, but it's not loud enough to be disruptive so it's a very effective solution for our expanding team. People love the kitchen pod and the meeting pod gives us our own area to work and meet in. Overall it has transformed our space, improved our acoustics and the colours give the whole place a lift!"

"OVERALL IT HAS TRANSFORMED OUR SPACE, IMPROVED OUR ACOUSTICS AND THE COLOURS GIVE THE WHOLE PLACE A LIFT!"

JAN LAWRENCE
DIRECTOR

SCREENED FOR SOUND

HOW UPHOLSTERED SCREENS AND PODS CAN IMPROVE OFFICE ACOUSTICS.
Former Creative Director of Workspace for CBRE, architect Giuseppe Boscherini is a sought-after designer and facilitator specialising in co-creation workshops that yield uniquely innovative and tangible outcomes. We asked him to share his thoughts about creativity, collaboration and what people are looking for in their workspace.

**Chance encounters**

"Whether it's for social or business purposes, people thrive on interaction. Google promotes social encounters in its workspaces to counter the solitude of coding, so it dots cafes and breakout spaces around its offices to enable chance encounters and places to 'touch down' with a colleague. It's important to have these informal spaces to strengthen your networks and refresh your thinking."

**The millennial skills co-operative**

"It's fascinating to see how the younger generation are creating their own way of working; just look at companies like Liquid Space in San Francisco and Workspace Group here in London that offer super-flexible office space. You can rent a desk in amongst a bunch of other people and you see millennials almost setting up a guild-style environment where people of all different disciplines come together, co-working under one roof to share expertise. There's a huge variety of skills working together without an overarching corporate structure, it's like a skills co-operative. They are very self-motivated, they're looking for a more liberated way of working. It's the future of work."

**It's still about status**

"People naturally desire status to mark their individual achievements; they want territory and often that means their own desk. When you ask people what they want it might not be a fluid, hot-desking environment because that doesn't accord them any status so it's important to understand and acknowledge the career component of being at work."

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"There's a lot more thought going into spaces for events that are less formal but at the same time highly structured, choreographed and curated. If you've got a room full of high flyers you have to make it unquestionably worth their time. A lot of the creative sessions I run incorporate movement to re-energise participants and theatre to engage them. They leave exhausted but happy and fulfilled, having given it their all to achieve tangible, worthwhile outcomes. So, the environments in which these very intense sessions happen have to be up to the challenge, they have to be agile, flexible with excellent power and data connectivity. The QuantumBlack Client Lounge is a good example of this; it's a space that works really hard and is used for many different types of collaborative working."

**Identify your ‘happy’**

"If you want to change your workspace you first have to think: what is my happy? Am I looking for greater productivity? More creativity? Better health? More profit? Increased staff retention? Once you've identified where greater happiness lies you can start to think about how to achieve it – but you must have a clear set of goals at the outset so you can design the right solution."

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Giuseppe Boscherini

**BE CAREFUL WITH HOT DESKS AND MAKE SPACE FOR CHANCE ENCOUNTERS...**

**WORDS OF ADVICE FROM ARCHITECT AND GRAPHIC FACILITATOR GIUSEPPE BOSCHERINI.**

**VISIT BOSCHERINI.COM**
WHEN HI-TECH GETS TACTILE: THE QUANTUMBLACK CLIENT LOUNGE

QuantumBlack works at the leading edge of advanced analytics, transforming data into tangible insights and actionable strategies for clients around the world. You might expect such hi-tech alchemy to be forged in an environment replete with sophisticated electronic screens and not a scrap of paper in sight, but in actual fact this is a company that wholly embraces the tactile in its journey towards clarity and insight.

‘Intelligence: Beautifully Engineered’ is QuantumBlack’s strapline, and it alludes to a functionality that has a quasi-aesthetic elegance. Operating at the intersection of strategy, technology and design, there is true beauty in how their data analytics work. Attaining this level of sophistication requires a high level of creativity and collaboration, in addition to superior technical skills to deliver outstanding results, and this is what inspired the design of their new office and Client Lounge in London’s West End.

Emphatically non-digital
When architect and graphic facilitator Giuseppe Boscherini designed the Client Lounge at QuantumBlack’s central London headquarters, the brief was to focus on how clients interact and work with the company. It became clear that the client journey often starts in an emphatically non-digital way as processes, systems and challenges are described and understood; the technology comes in further down the road. Similarly, the QuantumBlack team needed a space that offered a strong counterbalance to the inevitable screen time required in a hi-tech industry. The Client Lounge is a highly agile space with mobile tiered seating, Wilkhahn conference tables with flip tops so they can be stored away, Ares Line chairs that stack horizontally and Spaceoasis® Working Walls - large-scale writable walls that can be moved around to act as space dividers or to create a huge canvas on which to write, display ideas and feedback. The furniture can be variously configured to accommodate client events, hackathons, ideation sessions, training and collaboration of all types including town-hall style meetings and conferences.

Giuseppe Boscherini commented, “The Client Lounge is an intensely collaborative space. It was very carefully specified to provide maximum agility, flawless functionality with an urban industrial aesthetic. What we needed was a space that met the requirements for uninhibited creativity to enable big thinking. The Working Walls from Spaceoasis® help create an environment that invites comment and exposes ideas; there’s an immediacy to the feedback because it’s right there in front of you – all you need is a pen and you can contribute. The storage inside the walls also means when they are running a client session, where they need to extract value from every minute, they can access resources and props instantly.”

QuantumBlack was acquired by McKinsey & Company in 2015. Born in Formula One and established to reimagine how organisations could continuously improve and outlearn their rivals, today, they are still fascinated by how the smallest edge or marginal gain can have a major impact. For further details view www.quantumblack.com.
David Marks is the founding director of Marks Barfield Architects (MBA), together with his wife and partner Julia Barfield.

Perhaps the best-known of MBA’s projects is the London Eye, which has established itself as a world-famous London landmark, giving 1% of its ticket sales revenue to the local community every year.

MBA has established its reputation as a highly innovative architectural practice delivering designs that have a positive impact on society, that evoke pride and elicit joy. In October 2016, MBA had people ‘walking on air’ with the opening of its iconic British Airways i360 in Brighton, a vertical pier with observation pods rising to a height of 188m to give a unique perspective on the British seaside town. 2017 sees the practice shortlisted for Education Architect of the Year Award in recognition of its work designing the University of Cambridge Primary School, which opened in 2016, and the Michael Tippett School in Lambeth for children with profound and multiple learning disabilities.

In 2004 we worked with Marks Barfield Architects to design our trademark Segment System, combining our knowledge of plywood engineering with their architectural expertise to create a product that went on to win a FIRA Innovation award.

What made you choose to become an architect?
At school I was interested in art but didn’t think I would make the cut as an artist. I enjoyed technical studies and structures. Architecture held out the opportunity of combining my interests in arts and science.

What would you have done if architecture hadn’t worked out?
I am a fairly determined sort of person so the question never arose.

Marks Barfield has been enduringly successful for 25 years, what’s the key to your success?
In a word: Teamwork.

Where do you draw inspiration from for your projects?
Nature, geometry, art, science, Julia.

What is your favourite building and why?
No-one seeing the Palm House in the Royal Botanic Gardens for the first time can fail to be amazed and wonder how, with so little apparent structure, and no diagonal bracing, it manages to stand up. It is so light, so restrained, and so unlike anything else happening at that time, when everyone else was doing ornamental Neo-Classical design. Decimus Burton was a prolific and inspired architect, but for me the Palm House was his moment of genius. It’s gentle, graceful and gossamer, a natural form with the delicacy and feel of a spider’s web in the morning dew. Like a soap bubble, its surface structure is thin compared with the volume it’s enclosing. There is an extraordinary lightness to it. It almost looks like it would float away if it weren’t anchored to the ground.

At Spaceoasis® we work with commercial clients and education. What would your key piece of advice be for someone designing: a. An office and b. A school?
Try to think beyond the brief. Think beyond design and architecture. Be innovative and entrepreneurial.

In this issue of Create we’re looking at how public sector organisations can make their buildings more efficient to mitigate the effects of cuts in public spending, what would your advice be?
Consider the advice ‘Long life, loose fit’. 

How do you feel about the London skyline with all its tall buildings?
I feel it is a pity that so many of these tall buildings are dark masses on the skyline. They ought to be light, reflecting, and continuing London’s finest architectural tradition.

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In 1972 Sir Alexander John Gordon, in his role as President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, defined good architecture as ‘long life, loose fit and low energy’. While ‘low energy’ has been fully absorbed as the norm and no-one wants buildings with a short life span, the ‘loose fit’ element of the 3Ls has been less obviously embraced. The idea is that buildings have an inherent capacity for adapting to change, that knocking it down and starting again is unnecessary because it can be reconfigured or refurbished within the bounds of economic and practical sense. The 3Ls are still held as desirable architectural characteristics, so perhaps it’s time ‘loose fit’ came back into fashion.

Large scale writable walls are increasingly popular with companies in all types of sectors, is this something you’ve come across and why do think this is? We have had a large writable wall in our main meeting space for over 25 years. It means you can literally think on your feet.

People are increasingly using coffee shops as work spaces, do you ever work in a coffee shop and what do you think is their appeal?
Work is an increasingly social activity so it is quite natural that social environments become work environments.

LONG LIFE, LOOSE FIT, LOW ENERGY

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When your mission is fighting cyber warfare, battling viruses and malware at the cutting edge of 21st century technology, continuous innovation is what keeps you one step ahead. Sophos, the Abingdon-based IT security firm, delivers peace of mind to over 100 million people worldwide with its anti-virus and encryption software solutions and welcomes clients from all over the world to its offices.

When Facilities Manager Victoria Marshall Tuck looked at the company’s secure demonstration space, the existing leather sofas and chunky TV screens simply didn’t reflect the hi-tech sophistication Sophos delivers to its clients.

“This space is where we show clients and investors what we can do and it wasn’t an accurate expression of who we are or what we do,” explains Victoria. “We wanted a sleek, contemporary space that could accommodate 18 people in comfort and style with good visibility of the screen.”

The large bespoke screen was commissioned from F1AV and is seamlessly integrated into the far wall, with not a wire in sight. Two tiered Attune units from Spaceoasis® in the company’s corporate colours provide comfortable seating for 14 people with a clear view of the screen. Armchairs and upholstered stools from Boss complete the room. As well as demonstrations to clients and investors, security-cleared staff use the room for meetings and as a collaboration space for project teams.

“The feedback from across the company has been very positive,” said Victoria. “This space delivers in terms of comfort, style and functionality. Staff have asked if they can use the space to watch sports fixtures and movies but, as it’s a secure area, we had to let them down gently!”

THE FEEDBACK FROM ACROSS THE COMPANY HAS BEEN VERY POSITIVE, THIS SPACE DELIVERS IN TERMS OF COMFORT, STYLE AND FUNCTIONALITY.”

VICTORIA MARSHALL TUCK
FACILITIES MANAGER, SOPHOS
Walls have had some bad press lately, but there are walls that can actually help bring people together, inspire creativity and help ideas flourish. The Spaceoasis® Working Wall brings instant wow factor to work and event spaces with its brilliant simplicity. If you only add one thing to your office this year, make it one of these...

**01 ON A ROLL** - Mounted on castors, Working Wall is mobile so you can move it between spaces (depending on sufficient door / corridor width). This is a wall you can share.

**02 SEEING DOUBLE** - Double sided so two teams can work on it once. (See? Walls can be collaborative.)

**03 INTEGRATED STORAGE** - Integrated storage means you can store pens, cleaning fluid and cloths plus any props you need for presentations or events.

**04 LOOKING GOOD** - Made with our trademark Learning Surface®, a highly durable, ultra-cleanable writable surface that lasts while retaining its sleek good looks.

**05 WHATS THE BIG IDEA?** - Very large writable surface gives you a canvas on which to explore big ideas and solve complex problems.

**06 LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION** - Project onto its surface and use it like a large mobile screen for presentations or even films. Combine with tiered seating for the ultimate presentation space.

**07 ON-BRAND** - If plain white isn’t your thing, we can add graphics to make your wall on-message and on-brand.

**08 SUPER SMOOTH** - LearningSurface® is compliant with the quality standard BS EN 14434:2010 which covers the ability to write and erase as well as the staining of boards. (In other words it’s super smooth to write on and easy to get smudge-free-clean).

**09 COOL UNDER PRESSURE** - Coated with a highly durable type of thermosetting plastic resin set under extreme pressure at very high temperatures to make it super tough. Sticky back plastic this is not.

**10 TRULY EPIC!** - Group several Working Walls together to create a truly epic canvas on which to collaborate.