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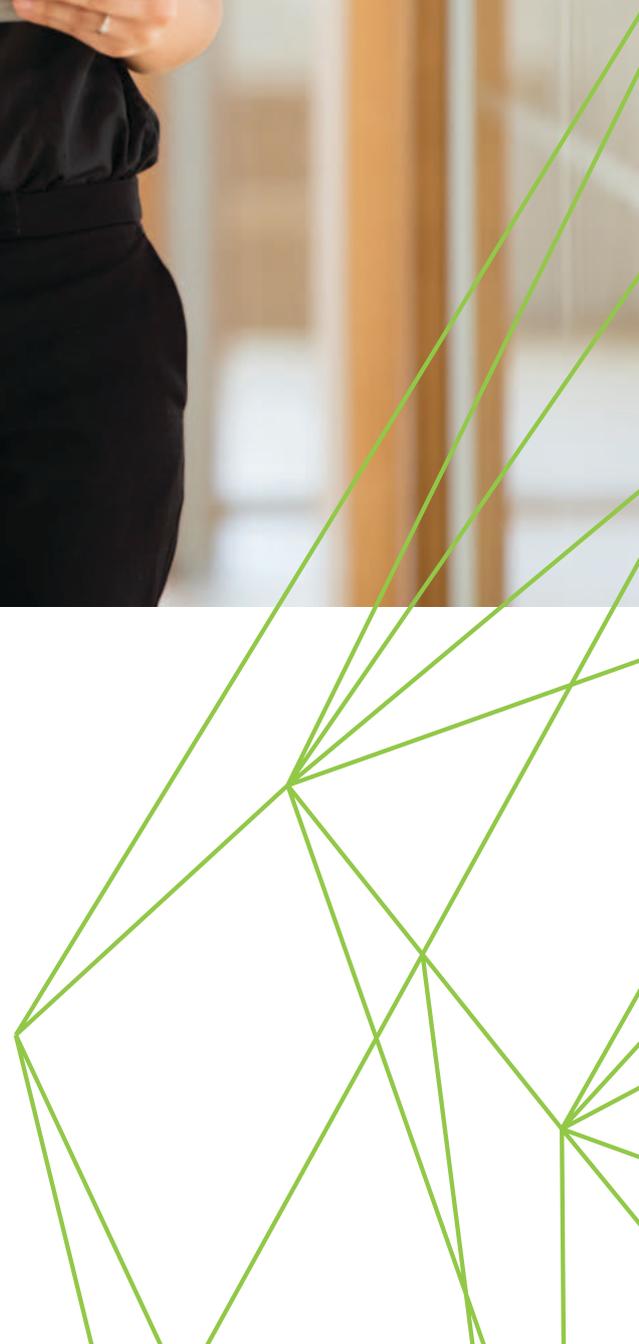
WHAT TYPE OF OFFICE WORKER ARE YOU?

The Evolution of Agile Working

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Today's modern work environment offers a bemusing array of options. Technology enables us to work from home, a cafe, from the office or sat on a train. Even the office provides many possibilities in the way that we work. We are no longer restricted to a single dedicated desk. Instead we are surrounded by a 'feature rich' environment with many work settings. It's great to have options, but sometimes workers can feel overwhelmed by choices: in fact it's all too easy to choose the wrong tool for the job. This confusion is amplified when we have to synchronise and cooperate with colleagues.

Thinking about the future, the aspirations and expectations of office workers will change. Statistics reveal how work-life balance and health concerns will increasingly influence our decisions about where to work and how. By equipping ourselves with a 'diagnostic tool kit' we will be more adept at making the right workplace decisions. We hope that this report will furnish you with a curiosity to experiment, in order to develop a more tailored and enriching way of working.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Why should managers encourage different work styles?
One of the most pressing and challenging issues in modern
organisations is engagement.*

An analysis of the most successful organisations (based on a decade's worth of data from Gallup) indicates that high engagement routinely produces positive outcomes for individuals and organisations. By engagement, we mean having a strong connection with your work and colleagues; having the chance to learn; feeling that you make a difference.

The office environment is one of the most powerful tools for engagement. Unlike other short-term incentives, it provides a lasting opportunity for employees to make their impression. Activity-Based Working (ABW) allows you to choose the office setting best suited to your immediate task. Some settings enable the creation of a group identity and personalisation.

So, what is my work style? Everyone is characterised by their background, their job type and their temperament. By combining each of these we get a clearer idea of who we are. In essence we can say 1) culture; 2) mobility and 3) temperament, together tells us what type of office worker we are.

Having looked at each of these dimensions, this report suggests ways in which you can become a more fulfilled employee: or particularly, how can you make the office environment work for you. Temperament has until now been the least understood of the three factors affecting work style. Yet, recent advances in neuroscience have identified four unique work styles based on brain chemistry: Pioneers; Guardians; Drivers; and Integrators. In fact, each of these can be linked to parts of the brain associated with dopamine, testosterone, serotonin and oxytocin production. This knowledge is transforming our understanding of relationships and teams. Companies such as Deloitte are already using these insights to create and manage teams effectively within their organisation.

Some of the predictions in the report include:

- Face-to-face working and team working will eclipse computer interaction in the office

- Computer-based working will increasingly be undertaken in remote locations (e.g. home working or satellite offices)

- Work style will increasingly reflect personality types rather than culture (as organisations become more multicultural and multinational)

- Organisations will encourage diversity in work styles in order to get the best out of any team collaboration

- In successful organizations, greater ownership and personalisation of space will create group identity and trust

- Activity-Based Working will reflect each of the four personality types (rather than being based on a singular organisational monoculture)

- Attention will be recognised as the single most limiting resource of an organisation

- Facilities managers will be 'gardeners' rather than 'architects' ensuring that the elusive quality of engagement is continuously nurtured in the office environment

We are told that there isn't just one way of doing things. What works for one individual, one team or one culture might not work for another. So we are quite right to ask the question 'what type of office worker am I' or 'what way of working best suits me?' This White Paper comes up with some radical and often surprising insights about you: insights that point to new ways of working that match your own culture and temperament.

WHAT TYPE OF OFFICE WORKER ARE YOU?

Here's a question for you. What type of office worker do you think you are? No, it's not a pub quiz question or an app on your smart phone: one that gets you to stereotype your colleagues or maybe even yourself - are you 'the noisy typer' or 'the loud talker', perhaps you're 'the office gossip' or 'the one that's always too cold'. Well in fact this is not a trivial question.

The modern office is almost unrecognisable from that of yesteryear. It is no longer bounded by four walls. There are many choices today about when, where and how we work. If we are able to make the right choices about what we call 'work style', we will get greater leverage from the possibilities that surround us. If we get it right, we may be able to increase our productivity, be able to establish a sustainable work-life balance, be able to boost our creativity and be more collaborative. Most importantly of all, we may increase our own happiness at work.

The following report is designed to encourage you to think again about your work environment. It highlights how the 'physical environment' plugs into the 'behavioural environment' and the 'virtual environment'. Perhaps you are moving from a traditional to a flexible office environment? Or perhaps you've been working in a New Ways of Working (NWoW) environment but you're not quite sure what that new way is? Whatever your answer, understanding ourselves and where we fit in our organisation is pivotal in making the best of what the office environment has to offer us.

WORK STYLE

The starting point for understanding how we as individuals function in the office environment is to articulate our own 'work style'. Once, this may have been dictated entirely by our job function. Today however, we see colleagues around us doing the same job in a variety of different ways. We can think of a work style as:

"...a recognisable and accepted system, which influences how people work with each other and with the provided workspace and tools" [1].

There are three parts to this definition:

• Firstly, it needs to be 'understandable' to you and other employees. As such it relates to issues such as self organisation, autonomy, trust and openness

• Secondly, it should be an approach that allows everyone to be involved. This should be based on 'acceptance' rather than a top-down system of instruction

• Finally, it should be 'interconnected'. The three elements (1) behavioural; (2) virtual and (3) physical systems should be capable of working together

This idea of work styles is not about detailing a flexible working arrangement with your employer, it is about creating a working 'mental model' that provides a roadmap for each of us. The importance of synchronicity (collaboration) and interconnection (mobile working) is fundamental to this approach.

So if there was an equation that helped us to formulate our own work style, it might look something like this: Work style = f (Culture x Mobility x Temperament)

In the following sections we look at each of these factors in turn - culture, mobility and finally temperament. Knowing how your work style mix combines, you can start to see the possibilities that the office environment offers.

Figure 1: The three dimensions of work style

MOBILITY

CULTURE

TEMPERAMENT

WORK STYLE

VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

BEHAVIOURAL ENVIRONMENT
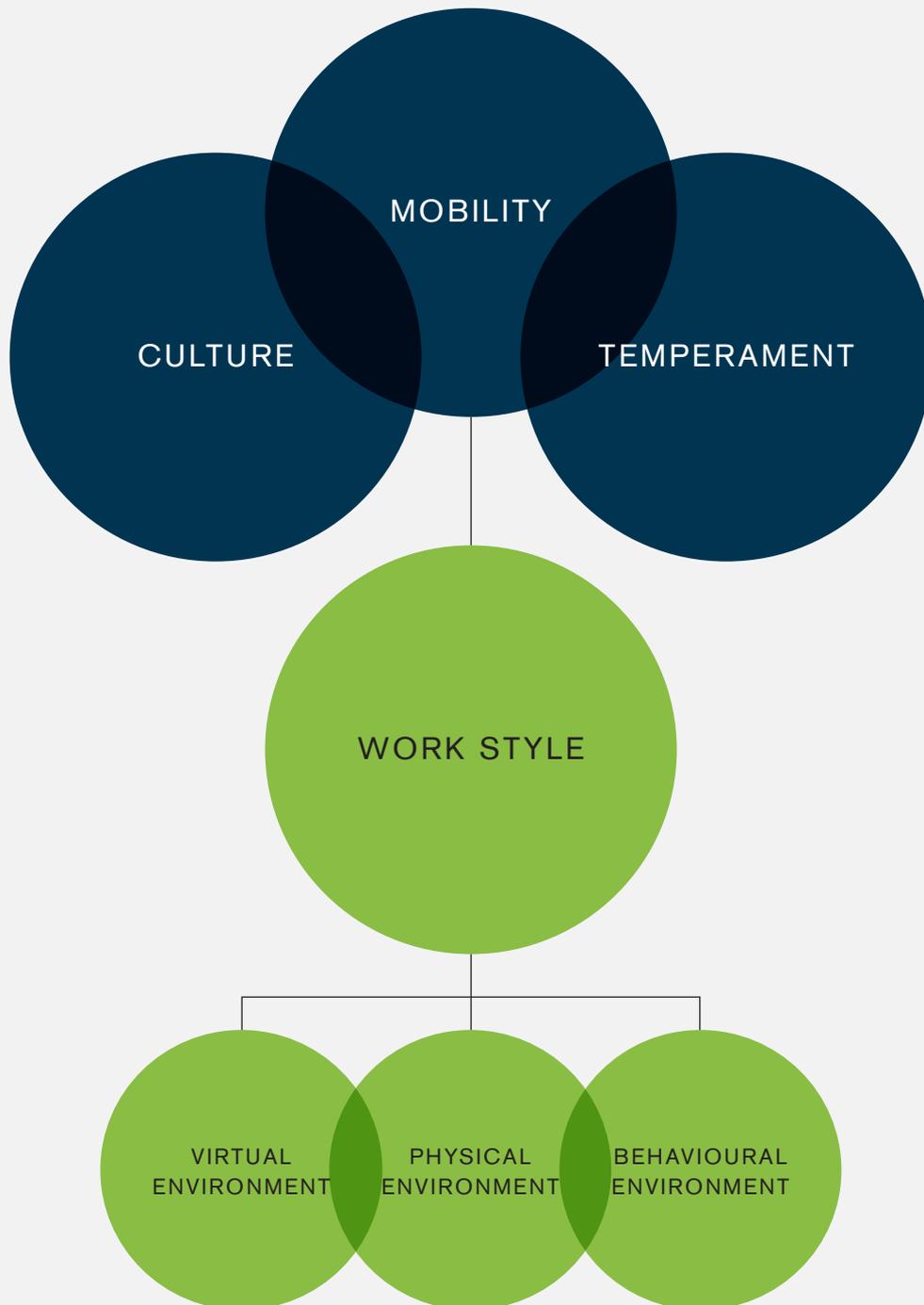
Joining a new organisation will always begin with a feeling of being disconnected until the 'way of doing things' becomes second nature. And this is not just about knowing where to find the coffee, or how to answer the phone, it is about imbibing the company culture.

CULTURE

Cultural influences are applied in everyday life; and differences in age, nationality, gender and profession often give rise to differing customs and beliefs. Even within the organisation, we may have assimilated cultural influences that are unique to a particular team or department.

We can think of culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" [2]. Office designers can sometimes ignore cultural differences at their peril. There are many stories of multinationals trying to implement a standard blueprint for office design around the world. However, what works well for one country often proves to be wholly inappropriate for others where local customs and ways of working are significantly different.

Steelcase (a major workplace designer in the US) grappled with this conundrum. As an organisation it wanted to know how the different dimensions of a culture can impact on office designs. In its study [3] of 11 different countries involving thousands of employees from France, Germany, Italy, US, Russia, China and the UK among others, six dimensions of culture were identified;

• Autocratic versus consultative

• Individualist versus collectivist

• Masculine versus feminine

• Tolerance of uncertainty versus security oriented

• Short-term versus long-term

• Low context versus high context

Each of these dimensions describes two complete opposites. Typical office workers of a particular nationality can be located somewhere along a continuum between these two extremes.
For example, some national cultures show very little collaboration between the levels of an organisational hierarchy.

This is what is described as an autocratic culture which relies on 'telling' rather than 'selling'. At the other extreme is the consultative style that maximises the involvement of employees in the decision-making process. In these cultures, collaboration is king.

From the Steelcase study, Russian and Indian cultures tended to endorse the autocratic approach with cellular spaces and limited access to executives. At the other end of the continuum, Germany and the UK, leaders' workspaces were much more accessible open-plan environments, inviting interaction between employees at all levels.

How were the scores for each dimension arrived at? If we look at just one dimension, 'individualist' versus 'collectivist', a set of indirect questions would have been presented to an employee. One such question might be to identify which of the following two statements best describes your company culture:

Speaking one's mind is healthy…
Harmony should always be maintained

It is the responses to a number of such questions that allowed the researchers to establish whether the employees operated in an individualist or collectivist culture.

If we look at another dimension, short-term versus long-term, it was found that the US appeared on the left-hand side, with a focus on minimising investment and providing a fast return. In direct contrast, Chinese office environments tended to express long-term considerations such as a company's history, its values and rituals.

The results of this and other studies allow us to identify what type of office environment is likely to succeed in a particular country (whilst remembering that many offices may host employees from many different countries). For example, in countries where competition is valued more than collaboration, conventional cellular or private offices might be appropriate. In a more cooperative culture, the presence of open plan spaces may be essential.

Cultures also differ between companies, departments and teams. It is possible to 'dimensionalise' culture at each of these levels in order to gain a closer understanding of how it affects our way of working.

MOBILITY

Flexible working now means that our work is no longer defined in terms of location. We can remain connected with our clients and work colleagues whether we are in the office, on the road, at home, at a client base or in a coffee shop. However, whilst many things have become possible, not every choice fits the task at hand. Different tasks present different demands. Some require complete attention, whilst others are routine and can be accomplished even when there are distractions. Some tasks involve teamwork and collaboration. Yet others are highly sensitive or perhaps involve access to specific documents or equipment.

We've all made the wrong decision about our work setting at times. Getting it wrong can mean doubling our effort (cognitive load) and heightening our stress levels. Take for example a typical scenario involving mobile working on a train. 'Across the table is a recruitment consultant who is pawing through a pile of job applications. You do your best to ignore the CV particulars that go on display.

Perhaps you just feel relieved that it's not your personal information that everyone can see. Next to the consultant is a stressed mobile worker attacking her keyboard with venom. She battles for elbow space as the recruitment consultant spreads his wares liberally across the table. Both are distracted by the jolting train and the exclamations made on the loudspeaker'. Of course this type of work setting does have its advantages. Being disconnected provides a rare opportunity for us to catch up on things. In the train journey scenario we might also have no choice but to use this free time irrespective of how conducive the surroundings are.

In the report produced by DEGW [4], 'Working Beyond Walls: the government workplace as an agent of change', four factors are identified as being important when choosing a work setting:

1. Intrinsic characteristics: this refers to the specific requirements of the job. Does it involve prolonged concentration away from distractions? Does it demand collaboration with colleagues (co-location)?

2. Extrinsic characteristics: this refers to additional resources that are required to fulfill the tasks. This may include access to specific documents or expertise.

3. The wider context: other factors may determine the choice of a location including the proximity to a client's site or perhaps issues related to work-life balance (e.g. location of the nursery).

4. The background context: you need to be mindful of the organisational values that prevail in your organisation. This relates to the issue of culture discussed in the previous section. Is your organisation seeking to be agile, trust-centred or perhaps lean in its philosophy? The answer to this question should influence your choice of work setting.

The report [4] goes on to identify distinct types of 'work style' categories (here referred to as mobility), based on their position in a 'distributed workplace model'. These include:

Residents:
• team anchors / process workers

Internally mobile
• knowledge workers / executive managers

Externally mobile
• nomads / home workers

For some people (and fortunately increasingly fewer), presence at a specific workstation is a necessity. Such 'resident' employees have to be available in order to fulfil responsibilities as a contact point or because they are a necessary part of a 'production line' involving other key workers and physical documents. More than ever, jobs allow mobility in the workplace. 'Internally mobile' workers include knowledge workers, creative workers, digital media amongst others.
For these workers, mobility within the office allows them to interact with co-workers in a more proactive manner and to engage in a variety of work settings.

The final group of 'externally mobile' employees or nomads may be based at satellite offices (often belonging to customers or clients) or operate as home workers.

Your job characteristics tell us something about what work style fits with you. But understanding what type of office worker you are goes well beyond filling out a job description and walking away with a box of stationary and a password. To really get to the bottom of this you need to understand what makes you 'tick'. In the third of the 'work style' factors, 'temperament', we find out what type of office worker you are. We see how the world of neuroscience is shining a spotlight on how people work.

TEMPERAMENT AND PERSONALITY TYPES

There are two sides to understanding what makes us tick. Culture is the first of these and is embedded deeply within us through our upbringing and immersion in society. It tells us how to behave and accepted ways of doing things. The other side is temperament. This is determined by our biology, our hormones and by neurotransmitters.

We're probably all familiar with personality profiling. The most common of these is the Myers-Briggs method which you may have had 'done' to you knowingly or unknowingly at the interview stage. Are you an introvert or an extrovert? Are you more about thinking or feeling? Do you rely on intuition or sensing? One fundamental criticism of these techniques is that they are not based on hard science. But recent developments in neuroscience are now offering up direct evidence on how the brain functions at work. We now know much more about our temperament - and how this is driven by our biological design.

"Why does someone fall in love with one person rather than another?" This was the question that Helen Fisher, an anthropologist, was asked by Match.com [5]. It soon became apparent that her approach, based on neurological science, was equally applicable to other relationships - family, friends, co-workers and clients. Since then she has been working closely with Deloitte who have created a system called Business Chemistry. This system identifies four work styles that characterise people at work. Each of them is linked to a collection of personality traits. These four work styles (or temperaments) are illustrated in Figure 2.

The four work styles are:

- **Pioneers** who are attracted to radical and creative approaches. They are great believers in intuition and as part of the team they stimulate energy and imagination.

- **Guardians** depend on facts as a starting point. They are fastidious and pay particular attention to detail. Risk is something they try to avoid, valuing stability and order.
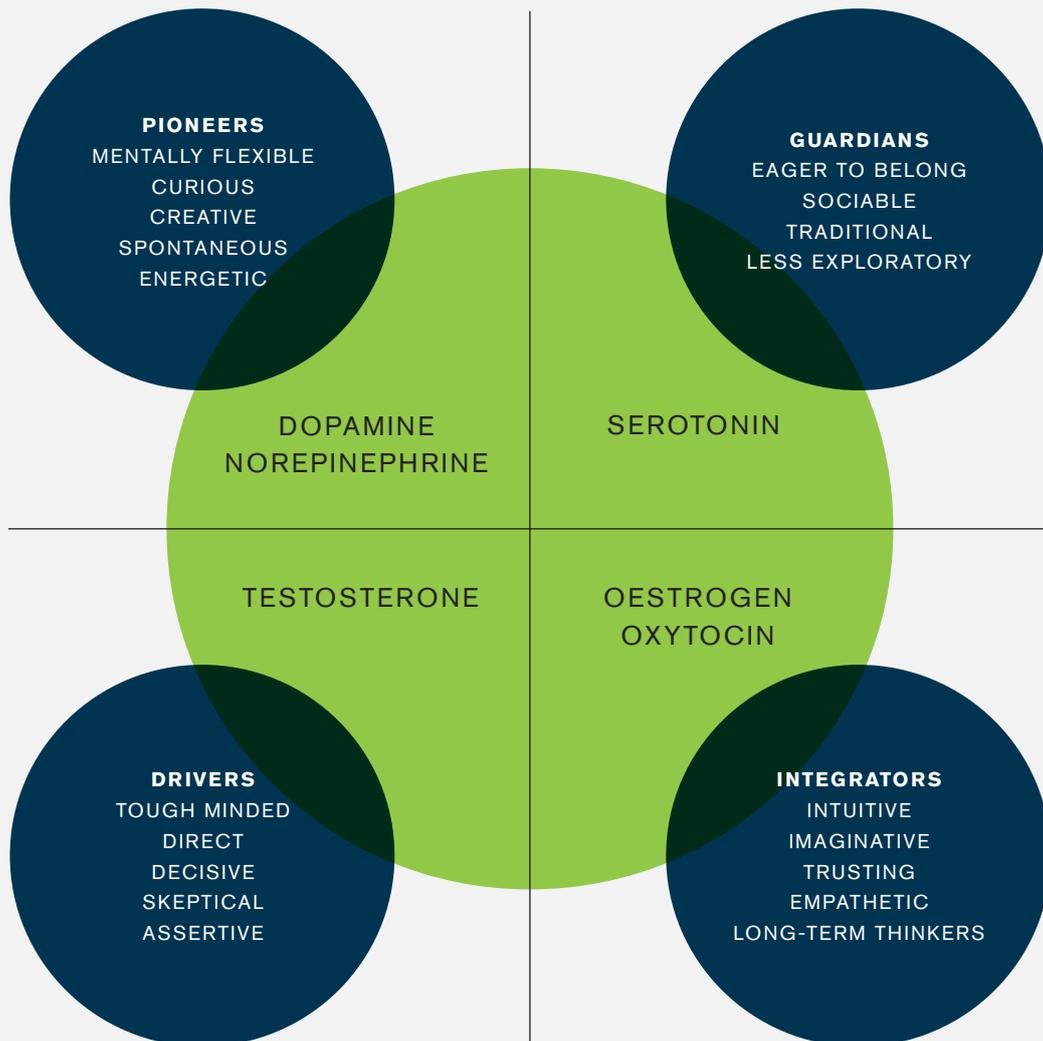
- **Drivers** are keen to see results, with winning being the main objective. They see problems as 'black-and-white' and tend to be at home in a rule-based system.

- **Integrators** are the diplomats. They always seek consensus and try to draw the team together. Unlike the drivers, they see things as being relative rather than black-and-white.

Can we 'pigeonhole' people in just one of these personality types? The test measures how strongly you express traits in each neural system. It's therefore possible to exhibit traits from different categories to varying degrees - so we might belong to more than one work style.

What happens if you put two people together with opposing personality types? It appears that the different styles are not equally dissimilar. For example, whilst Guardians are generally more reserved than Drivers, both types are highly focused and therefore share a common approach. In contrast, Guardians and Pioneers are direct opposites. When these styles come together there may be conflict. Generally the argument is that leaders of teams should foster a 'productive friction' between people of different work styles. Each of these categories has something to offer, but it is important to capture input from the non-dominant styles to prevent them being drowned out.

One particular trait, 'trust' [7], is particularly revealing in our workplace behaviour. It is linked to the oxytocin pathway in the brain. Experiments involving rodents show the brain chemical oxytocin is released when another animal was recognised as being safe to approach. In effect, it reduced levels of fear. Trials with human subjects have shown that oxytocin is released when people exhibit trust (e.g. trusting somebody with money) or trustworthiness (e.g. when the recipient of money reciprocates that trust).

PIONEERS
MENTALLY FLEXIBLE
CURIOUS
CREATIVE
SPONTANEOUS
ENERGETIC

GUARDIANS
EAGER TO BELONG
SOCIABLE
TRADITIONAL
LESS EXPLORATORY

DOPAMINE
NOREPINEPHRINE

SEROTONIN

TESTOSTERONE

OESTROGEN
OXYTOCIN

DRIVERS
TOUGH MINDED
DIRECT
DECISIVE
SKEPTICAL
ASSERTIVE

INTEGRATORS
INTUITIVE
IMAGINATIVE
TRUSTING
EMPATHETIC
LONG-TERM THINKERS

In the world of the workplace, trust is synonymous with engagement. Lack of engagement is seen as one of the greatest challenges facing organisations. High engagement involves being able to establish strong connections with work and colleagues; being able to feel that you can make a real difference; and that you have an opportunity to learn. Employees in a high-trust organisation are more productive, remain with their employees for longer and have more energy at work. When trust disappears employees are:

• Less willing to reveal information even when it could be helpful in moving a project forward

• Assume the worst of others

• Demand more than is possible

• Avoid confronting problems

• Are overly cautious about situations

Trust, or the lack of it, reveals itself in our use of office environments.

• We become more territorial, feeling threatened that others are seeking to encroach on our patch

• We become over sensitised to the noise of others, seeing it as a potential threat

• We become concerned about our own physical safety

Perhaps the best illustration of a high-trust workplace activity is 'fika' encountered in Swedish and Finnish working environments. There is perhaps no direct translation for fika in the English language. It is an important daily event (typically one at 9am and another at 3pm) where colleagues join together and socialise (often with a coffee and pastry), taking the chance to discuss both private and professional matters. It is quite common for management to join employees during such breaks and indeed it may be seen as rude for them not to participate. Anybody that has experienced fika will know how this ceremony can alleviate stress, strengthen bonds and create a daily rhythm.

Oxytocin is produced in abundance in an environment of trust [7]. In fact, we all produce more oxytocin when we have a sense of value and when we trust each other. This in turn creates a sense of joy.

The proven relationship between trust and joy is so well established, that joy can be considered a reliable measure of how effectively a company's culture engages employees. In other words, if we are in a trusting environment we will enjoy our job.

What are the implications for the type of office you are likely to enjoy? Based on the hard evidence of neuroscience we can say that trust/enjoyment will occur by:

• Giving people more discretion over how they do their work. Activity-Based Working (ABW) supports this type of work crafting.

• Providing a more collaborative office environment that stimulates the sharing of ideas and information. One of the greatest inhibitors of oxytocin release is excessive stress. By keeping people informed it is possible to reduce employee stress.

• Allowing people to develop personally as well as professionally. Clear desk policies may present challenges to this aspiration, but the availability of private spaces and lockers provide an opportunity for personalization.

• Maximising opportunities for interaction and chance encounters (serendipity) in the workplace. Settings such as breakout areas and photocopy rooms provide settings for interactions outside of established groups.

• Nurturing group identities by allowing teams to coalesce in a setting that reinforces their own subculture (e.g. client branded group setting).

Diversity in personality and work styles brings a richness to team working, providing different perspectives, checks and balances. It can also bring frictions between individuals of opposing temperaments. We know that the environment itself will undoubtedly affect our moods and behaviours: traits may become amplified or suppressed. For example, a highly stressful environment will reduce oxytocin levels and create a climate of mistrust. The field of neuroscience is shedding new light on our understanding of how we work as individuals and as teams: inevitably it will have repercussions for office design and how we use space.

OFFICE WORKER OF THE FUTURE

Having looked at the cocktail of culture, mobility and temperament, where does that leave us within a changing world? Organisations are transforming the way that work is done.

Much is made of how companies continually pursue efficiency gains. But in reality, organisations are equally focused on improving quality, increasing customer engagement and retaining the top talent amongst employees. Businesses are waking up to the potential of 'agile working' which encompasses a number of deep-rooted beliefs:

• Getting closer to the customer through early and continuous engagement

• Empowering individuals and teams with a high degree of autonomy in the way that they do their work

• Building projects around motivated individuals. This means giving them the environment and support they need, and trust them to get the job done

• Creating a climate of team self learning, whereby mistakes are not reprimanded but are seen as an opportunity to learn

• Established and nurturing self organising teams

It is clear that agile working is much more than flexible working. It involves a transformation in the way that people approach their work.

The world of work is changing. So rather than asking 'what type of office worker am I?' we could ask 'what type of office worker do I want or need to become?' Let's look at the evidence. In a longitudinal survey carried out by the CIPD [8] entitled 'HR: getting smart about agile working' it was suggested that:

"There is a marked shift towards the so-called 'independent' careers, where individuals' preferences are described by holding multiple jobs over the course of a career, lateral rather than upwards moves, and the diminishing centrality of work in individuals' lives" [8, p.5].

This statement is mirrored by employee responses to a series of questions regarding their job preferences. The same statements were revisited in 2005 and 2014 (a nine-year gap) showing a marked drift away from 'traditional' career attitudes towards 'independent' career attitudes.

Excerpt from a survey of 1,132 employees representative of the UK working population (does not include 'non-standard' jobs such as part-time, temporary or self-employed individuals)[8, p.5]

A series of jobs at the same kind of level	←——————→	*Striving for promotion into more senior posts*
67% (2014); 45% (2005)		33% (2014); 55% (2005)

A job you really like	←——————→	*A job that pays lots of money*
78% (2014); 85% (2005)		22% (2014); 15% (2005)

A clear boundary between work and home	←——————→	*Take work home*
86% (2014); 82% (2005)		14% (2014); 18% (2005)

The CIPD survey does indicate that employees see satisfaction at work as being important. However, even during this short time span between 2005 and 2014, there has been a small but significant drift towards financial rewards and a clearer distinction between work and home. The challenge is to make jobs and work environments more appealing to redress this trend.

Office designers will have their work cut out in order to counter the appeal of working from home, from a coffee shop or another attractive location. The possibilities afforded by mobile and remote technologies have made the 'work anywhere' principle a reality. Furthermore, increased congestion makes travelling to the office increasingly unattractive. Organisations such as Citrix, Lego and Google have attempted to introduce an element of 'play' in the office environment. At Citrix they have experimented with 'genius benches' which are long, shared desks with accompanying stools. Skullcandy has adopted movable desks which can be used individually or fitted together to support collaborative meetings.

Lego take the issue of working environments so seriously, that they have a department for "New Ways of Working". As a company they have embraced the concept of 'Activity-Based Working' (ABW). Areas are set aside for focused work, learning, collaborating or socialising. Trust is paramount in an ABW workspace given that employees are able to exercise discretion about their own visibility. Senior leadership likewise, has to demonstrate a commitment to the new way of working.

Senior director, Sophie Patrikios, reported on the success of ABW at Lego:

"In our May 2016 survey, 88% of staff said they liked the choice of where to work. They get a choice of different settings to suit their activity or mood, including a quiet library, a buzzing social area with background music, comfy chairs in cosy corners or big banks of desks to share with team-mates." [9].

Sedentary behaviour (or sitting on your posterior for too long) is being flagged up as a major health issue in the workplace. Advances in technology have encouraged all of us to remain seated for long periods of time.

Excessive sitting is now recognised as a major health hazard[10] associated with the 'physiology of inactivity' – this means that you can't just recover the situation by an hour in the gym. Sitting is bad for you full stop. Activity-Based Working may go some way towards reducing this problem. However, even with Activity-Based Working there remain challenges.

Some office workers may choose not to switch settings. Research from the Netherlands [11] investigated this problem of inertia. Strong objections to switching were encountered by some office workers. These workers were happier with a dedicated multifunctional workstation. Switching occurred most frequently when the work style was multifaceted, involved significant communication work and an element of external mobility.

Another challenge that is being addressed in 'offices of the future' is the ongoing tension between independent focused working and increased interaction. Open plan offices are assumed to encourage communication and interaction between co-workers. But this comes at a price. Compared to enclosed offices, open plan environments consistently suffer from uncontrollable noise and loss of privacy. Australian research [12] suggests that the increased noise level and decreased privacy offset any benefit arising from ease of interaction in open plan environments. This is perhaps part of a wider problem that the American academic T.H. Davenport describes as the limited resource known as 'attention':

"The scarcest resource for today's business leaders is no longer just land, capital, or human labour, and it certainly isn't information. Attention is what's in short supply" [13].

What is clear is that face-to-face communication is becoming a more important part of the office environment. Whether we are Guardians, Drivers, Integrators or Pioneers, going to the office allows us to work as teams.

What type of office worker are you in this emerging workplace? Perhaps you are frustrated by the conflicting work styles of others. On the other hand, 'hybrid vigour' and diversity is part of your team's success? Whether we are managers or not, dealing with office chemistry will be an ongoing challenge for the future.

CONCLUSION

We have all heard the clarion call for flexible working, agile working and New Ways of Working (NWoW). Until now these appeals have tended to focus on what technology can do for us: the supposedly liberating possibilities of mobile working.
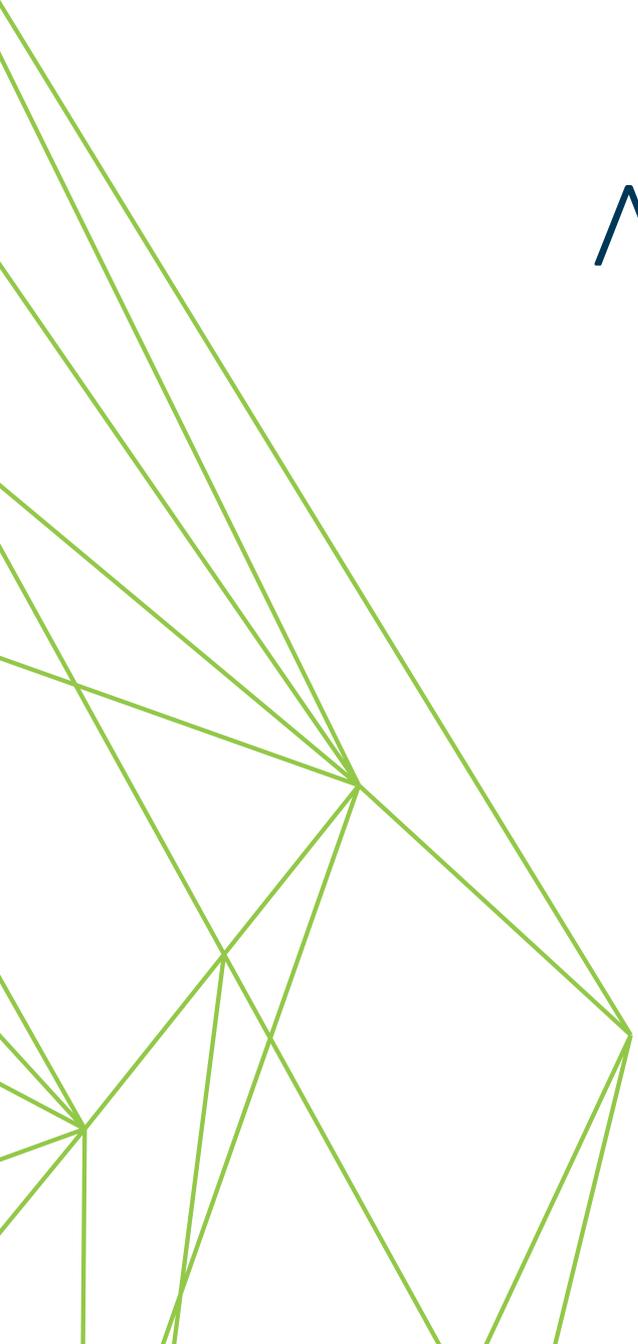
Yes, we can now work anytime and anywhere. But where does the human energy and joy of working come from? Can we strengthen our connections with colleagues: create learning opportunities and feel like a genuine contributor at work? Evidence suggests that technology sometimes does not hold all the answers. Cracking the 'nature' (temperament) and 'nurture' (culture) code is likely to be an overriding challenge for employers. As computing and AI encroach on routine process-driven work, the modern office will increasingly need to support creative activities that only humans can undertake.

"Fifty years ago computers were absent from office life… In 50 years time things will be much the same. There will be no machines on our desktops" [14].

The challenge for all of us is to understand how we act as part of a team. Personality differences between team members can be both beneficial and problematic. Creating complimentary partnerships will involve bringing opposites closer together: Guardians working with Pioneers, Drivers working with Integrators. Nurturing this elusive chemistry will be the challenge for all of us.

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