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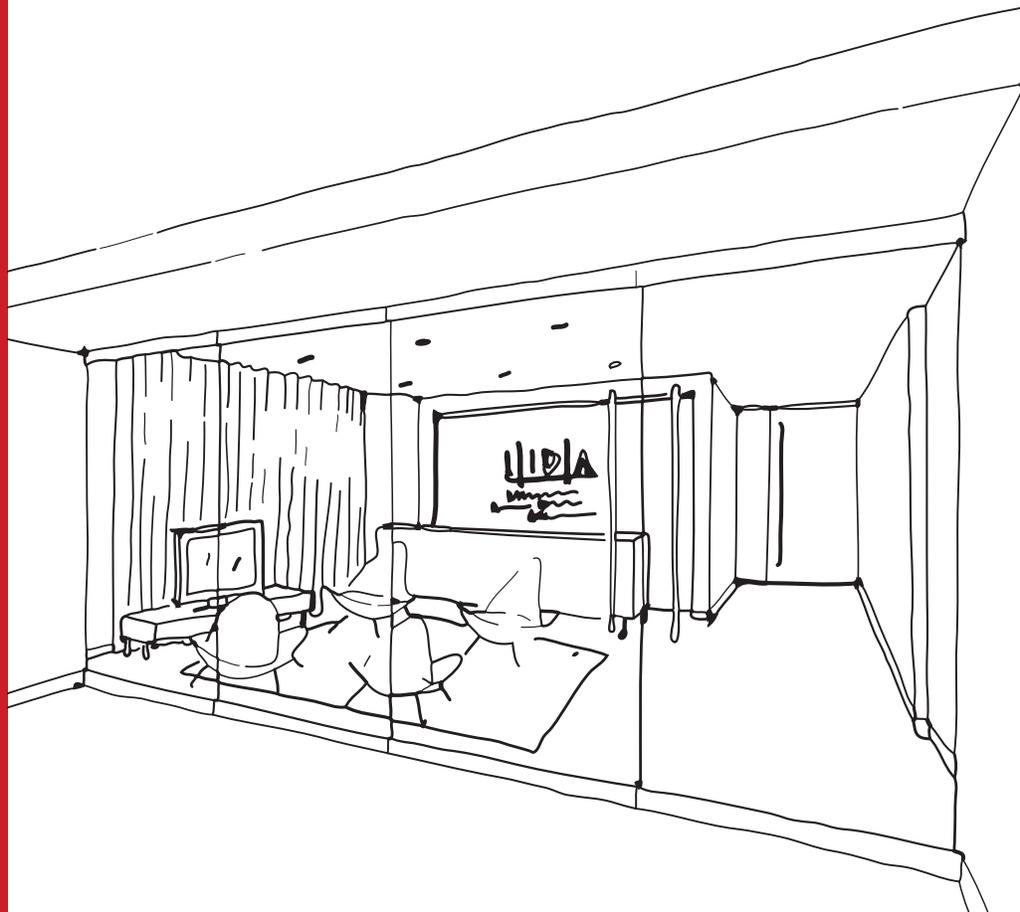
IIDA INDUSTRY ROUNDTABLE 17  
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# PEOPLE, PLACE, AND WORK:

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Analyzing the Critical Factors  
That Effect How We Work and  
How We Manage





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## INTRODUCTION: WORK IS EASY, BUT PEOPLE ARE HARD

**T**he IIDA International Board of Directors, IIDA Corporate Members, and senior design professionals from the A&D community convened in January for a facilitated, interactive dialogue about the workplace issues currently bedeviling them. This year's topic sprouted from a premise: Work is easy, but people are hard. True, the work designers do isn't exactly easy, often involving ambitious project briefs like rebranding cities and reinventing a client's corporate culture. But the creative act of designing is simple compared to the "people part": finding, hiring, developing, nurturing, managing, and mentoring employees (while keeping them from accidentally breaching client-nondisclosure agreements via their personal social-media feeds). Designing is not only easier than the people part: It's also *utterly dependent* on the people part. To do good work, we must do good people work. This maxim applies to how we manage our firms, how we interface with clients, and how we help those clients manage their own people via the spaces we design for them.

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**Primo Orpilla: "If you were a soup, what kind would you be and why?"**

**Chris Stulpin: "Consommé. The clarity and purity of the final product depends on a process of distilling."**

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Staff dynamics and professional politics are always challenging to navigate, but especially so in volatile times. The health of the economy, while still touch and go, is stabilizing on many levels; it is believed that 2014 should close the loop of recovery. In

January, 113,000 new jobs were generated (short of the 2013 monthly average of 194,000). The biggest growth sectors included leisure, hospitality, and retail—sectors that many in our industry serve.

As the economy upticks, interior design firms, manufacturers, and their clients are staffing up, whether on a temporary or permanent basis (or somewhere in between). Many are hiring more aggressively and more rapidly than ever before, and some have spent the last few years concertedly making over their staff—literally "designing" a more productive workforce better suited to the new economy. That involves both hiring and firing with surgical precision: out with the one-skill wonders, in with the self-guided, unflappable, and multidisciplinary flexitarians.

The new workforce is defined equally by who it is—"hybrid dynamos with entrepreneurial spirit," per Nelson's Scott Hierlinger, IIDA—and who it's *not*. One of the casualties of the workforce makeover? Old-timers who proved inadequately dexterous and flexible for today's everybody-does-it-all work environment. Their purging, though, often stimulates a whole other host of challenges, among them the loss of institutional memory and a connection to brand heritage.

The weekend's discussion touched on these issues as well as delved into such management concerns inspired by and impacting the new workforce: how to manage the multigenerational office; how to hire doer-thinkers; how to lead the self-led; when to trust your gut when hiring; whether to invest professional-development resources into a generation of millennial employees largely, but somewhat inaccurately, considered to be noncommittal job-hoppers; how to engage, inspire, and motivate staffers when the traditional methods—raises, promotions—are not feasible; and what are the best questions to ask potential hires. The "people part" may be the most frustrating aspect of the job, but it's also the most intriguing. And, when done right, is capable of propelling an organization to new heights.

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## EVENT OVERVIEW

**S**aturday morning kicked off with guest speaker Rick Valicenti, the founder of award-winning, paradigm-shifting communication-design studio Thirst. He discussed his hiring and management practices and his firm's humane, people-centric ethos—a talk that proved both inspiring and prescient, touching on myriad themes that emerged throughout the weekend: hiring for fit, putting people first, creative management, and more.

Next, as an icebreaker, IIDA Senior Vice President Dennis Krause, Hon. IIDA, initiated an “Inside the Actors Studio”-style Q & A session. Although the queries seemed innocuous enough— What’s your favorite TV program? Who’s your celebrity crush? What quality do you value most in others?—many answers uncannily foreshadowed discussion topics to come, particularly about problem-solving and teamwork.

Afterward, the group discussion began in earnest, starting with IIDA Executive Vice President and CEO Cheryl Durst’s socio-economic recap of 2013 and futurist forecast for 2014. This broad-strokes preamble introduced and contextualized many of the overarching complications and business/branding challenges firms are facing as they grapple with the “people part” and that directly impact how employees are hired, evaluated, compensated, and even fired. A recurring theme was the notion of workplace culture—how it’s defined, how to coax it in a new direction, and how the design of office space can inform and support (but not instigate) it. Culture proved the top concern for both design firms and manufacturers, which are increasingly hiring for cultural fit versus a particular skill set.

The afternoon session opened with a pair of guest speakers: executive and leadership coach Julia Tang Peters, founder of LeQ, and Lisa Zarick, a certified executive coach and senior VP of advertising/creative giant Leo Burnett. Appropriately, both “people experts” are models of multi-modality, a quality coveted by today’s employers: Tang Peters is a published author, while Zarick, a former voice-over artist, is involved in the Frontier Project, a conclave of

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**Q: “What’s your dream job?”**  
**Cheryl Durst: “Concierge of the world. Like Siri, but funnier—and with judgment.”**

**Q: “What was your worst job ever?”**  
**Ray Ehscheid: “Being a gift wrapper.”**

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American HR professionals who meet quarterly to discuss trends and workplace issues. The duo offered a human-resources perspective on current-day hiring and management practices, addressing succession planning, social media’s impact on productivity and corporate transparency, and other pressing concerns. Along the way, they also debunked a few myths about the millennial workforce and reaffirmed the importance of well-designed space to the getting-done of good work.

Discussions of hiring and management practices continued Saturday afternoon as the topic segued to globalism. Participants parsed the differences between American workers’ habits and attitudes and those of our European, Asian, and Latin American counterparts—particularly vis-à-vis work/life boundaries (or lack thereof), being a maverick (not highly regarded elsewhere), and a hierarchy based on meritocracy (versus seniority). It was also noted that the U.S. is considered *the* international design-thought leader in contemporary workplace design, and the precedents our contract designers set have become models for others—even in cultures and countries with a dissimilar philosophy and corporate setup. “A lot of their interest in us has to do with our experience here with complexity,” said IA’s Julio Braga, IIDA.

Next, attendees paired off for a series of mock job interviews, a sort of Method-style immersion in the weekend’s topic. One person played “interviewer” while the other took on the role of “job candidate,” and then they traded places. The exercise prompted nervousness, no doubt rooted in the belief by many attendees that, if they had to interview for their current position now, they might not get the job, so rigorous have their hiring standards become in the last few years. Those fears were quickly quashed by

the stellar performances of those on the hot seat, who demonstrated a number of interviewing best practices: not taking the bait to go negative, politely deferring the temptation to bad-mouth a current situation, reframing a weakness as a strength, and demonstrating passion, poise, integrity, and humor.

Finally, Sunday morning moved to a related conversation, an informal Q & A exchange between interior designers and manufacturers. Although the session was a topical departure from the main program, there was nonetheless plenty of overlap. At the root of each query was a concern about interpersonal relationships, the underlying theme of the weekend. It was a reminder that the yearning to understand (and the need to figure out) the “people part” isn’t just about our own organizations—it extends to our relationships with clients, colleagues, and industry partners, too.

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## PEOPLE ARE HUMAN. DESIGN SHOULD BE, TOO: THE PEOPLE-CENTERED DESIGN PRACTICE

**E**xhibiting his trademark wit, Rick Valicenti began by poking fun at his job status: “I have been unemployed since 1981.” In actuality, he’s spearheaded his own studio for 33 years, and has been “employed” by a roster of heavy-hitting clients including Archeworks, SOM, MAS Studio, and Studio Gang. As such, Thirst specializes in communication design that communicates *about* design—and via many forms, from print to digital. He described his practice as “multi-modal, which is apparently the new buzzword for interdisciplinary.”

Valicenti’s guiding ethos is humanism, a concept that informs every aspect of his practice, most notably how his work “speaks” to its audience. He espoused not getting hung up on the size of viewership, emphasizing that even something experienced by large volumes of people—a Times Square billboard, a high-traffic Web page, a corporate lobby, a stadium—should be designed to speak *one-*

*on-one*. “It comes down to one person talking to one person. It’s our job as designers to think about that one person and what their experience is like.”

He also urged consideration of the larger implications of design and its power to impact the world, which is not something practitioners should take for granted. “The first frontier of change is at the design conference table. Our clients are talking about the design of new cities and emerging populations. We are privileged to be at the cusp with new thinking and new ideas and real issues.”

Good design is not made in a bubble; it is very much dependent on interpersonal dynamics—between client and designer and between members of the design team—which need to be nurtured, guided, and coached. Good design depends on good management. Valicenti prescribed a number of ways to achieve that, crediting his own success (and low employee turnover) to a few recommended initiatives:

- **Embrace expertise redundancy:** The Chicago-based studio has expanded its network of staffers to three other cities and two other countries; across the organization, there is some overlap between skills and specialties. “This is not a new idea—larger firms do it all the time—but it’s a bit of an experiment for a smaller one,” he noted. The practice is abetted by today’s mobile culture and the technological tools that enable working remotely.
- **Create a talent pipeline:** Thirst sponsors an apprenticeship program, typically inviting a final-year MFA student to work in the studio for one semester. Almost all Thirst staffers joined the firm this way. Advantages of the program cut both ways: Apprentices get a “finishing school”-style experience, while the firm gets to vet potential employees in a commitment-free setting. Not only do these temporary, contingent employees become invested in the firm, but the firm also becomes invested in *them*. “It’s created a shift in our approach, to: I am going to find work so that I can keep this person full-time”—a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy.
- **Keep learning:** “We have a culture of investing in our pursuit of knowl-

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## “Design is powerful—and so is our role.” —Rick Valicenti

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edge,” explains Valicenti, who preps and delivers a workshop—usually in a classroom setting—about every five weeks. (A recent workshop took him to Beijing.) “And then I bring back the energy and the ideas that I hear,” he said. “It’s a bit of an exchange program”—an exchange of information, culture, and enthusiasm.

- **“You get what you do”** is another Valicenti adage: Do good work and you’ll get good opportunities to do *more* good work. Thirst has a long-standing commitment to design for social justice and has initiated efforts to harness the collective talents of the design community to instigate change. “It feels like a way to give it back, and the thread I see connecting the design community is fantastic.” Turns out that doing good is good for the industry, too.
- **Hire for fit:** “Our hiring practice isn’t so much based on portfolios, which can be grown, or ideas, which can be catalyzed. It’s based on values and character,” Valicenti explained. He seeks hires “who, by their very nature, can become the best part of someone else’s day.”
- **Hire the unflappable:** For many roundtable attendees, a favorite Valicenti quip was: “We look for the people who have flexibility without trauma.” By this, he meant “the people who can handle, ‘Oh, now it’s due at 10 AM instead of 3 PM.’”
- **Good design is a byproduct of good dialogue:** On collaborating with fellow creatives, Valicenti had this to say: “I work with accomplished people and—whether an architect or a photographer—they have the same space of vulnerability, of not-knowing, that I have when beginning a project. The not-knowing is where good conversation happens.” He dispelled the genius myth by emphasizing that great design sprouts not from one brain, but via an iterative, collaborative process of problem-solving—an

accretion of ideas that leads to just one of many possible solutions. “Not every idea you say will be right; you have to be flexible and quick [to come up with alternative solutions in the moment]. There’s not just one idea.”

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## WHO WE’RE HIRING

**C**ourtesy of the volatile economy, the rise of social media, and a shift in the type of employees we value most, industry hiring practices have changed significantly over the last few years—not only who is being recruited but also how those candidates are being pursued, interviewed, and brought onboard. Even the nomenclature has changed. “Hiring” is now commonly called “talent acquisition” or “human-capital management”—appropriately high-flown terms for an increasingly professionalized, codified, and fraught process.

### Hybrid Dynamos

So what talent—what “human capital”—are we looking for? Designers and manufacturers value the same qualities: candidates who are entrepreneurial, outgoing, ethical, proactive, team players, and low maintenance. Critical and strategic thinkers. Problem-solvers with integrity. Flexible types who are comfortable with change, open to shifts in project types and responsibilities, and who can multitask effectively and wear many hats. People with “soft” skills as well as strong written and verbal communication skills. People who can “get it done.” Who are self-motivated, can self-manage, and self-correct. For mid- and upper-level positions, a good personality and superior people skills are a must, as is being client-ready and prepared to assume leadership. A background in organizational development is a plus. Individuals who can thrive and be motivated in a changing, collaborative, cross-disciplinary environment. Scott Hierlinger summed it up best: “We are looking for hybrid dynamos with entrepreneurial spirit, who are not afraid of anything, and that we can promote quickly. I want people who feel that they have the utmost growth potential.”

Such applicants are a rare breed, but certain sub-genres have proven even more elusive. Who are we having trouble finding? Younger-generation hires who demonstrate strong business acumen and factory-floor specialists: “What we lack are the skill

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**“I like the self-managed, emotionally intelligent person—someone who can adapt from situation to situation.”**

**—Mark Shannon, Crossville**

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trades that have traditionally been the backbone of our industry,” lamented American Seating’s Deb McDermott, Ind. IIDA. “It’s hard to find people who take pride in the product.” Manufacturing processes risk being watered down as the pool of skilled trades atrophies and jobs are off-shored. Luckily, the trend seems to be reversing somewhat, as vocational schools are making a comeback in the U.S.

### **The generalist-specialist doer-thinker**

As a rule, designers and manufacturers are more interested in hiring generalists than specialists, but the hyphenate generalist-specialist is even more attractive—if more of an enigma. The doer-thinker has similar cachet.

The specialists being hired today are typically subject-matter experts—specialists to the nth degree—but they are less and less prevalent. “We just don’t have the luxury of having too many specialists, especially at entry-level positions, in an environment that demands multitasking,” declared SmithGroupJJR’s Rob Moylan, IIDA. And to gain a competitive edge in a tough marketplace, design firms and manufacturers are expanding their scope of services—with a lean staff to boot. “Even if we are busy, we need to stick to a certain head count,” Moylan continued. “That means every staff member needs to be able to contribute no matter what the task.” Accordingly, everyone has to boast diverse skills, and be continually broadening their proficiencies.

### **In the box**

Given the nascent fixation on diversity, you might think that firms are increasingly interested in out-

of-the-box candidates. Not true. Most designers seemed unmoved by the prospect of unorthodox hires and haven’t had notable success with them in the past. New staffers are expected to hit the ground running on day one; there’s no time to invest in mid- or upper-level neophytes that require extra training, and who may not have an immediate grasp of deliverables and performance expectations. “We want stars and top performers that will pay back right away,” said Milliken Carpet’s Enrique Reyes, Ind. IIDA. Left-field hires have too steep a learning curve, agreed Bank of America’s Ray Ehscheid, Affiliate IIDA. “Pre-recession, I was more willing to gamble on new people with untested experience, but today’s workloads demand getting up to speed rapidly.”

So long as a candidate had the right credentials and expertise, designers are somewhat willing to take chances on those with an unusual background or who didn’t quite dovetail with their organization’s profile. Sometimes enthusiasm can seduce a future employer. Said Braga, “We look for people with a diverse background and versatility, and if they have passion, the rest of this stuff is easier.” Indeed, passion was a clincher—if not a replacement for the needed skills.

Manufacturers were more keen to experiment with unconventional hires, perhaps because sales and marketing skills are thought to be translatable between industries. “We are hiring a purposeful blend of those with good industry experience and those with no industry inexperience,” said OFS Brand’s Doug Shapiro, Ind. IIDA. Many have had positive experiences with out-of-the-box candidates, noting that they’ve brought to their organization a newfound rigor, an outside perspective, enhanced energy, and novel business opportunities and, in some cases, have fundamentally changed said organization’s approach or methodology. Much discussed were candidates with no prior sales experience but who boasted significant design-industry expertise, abundant drive, supernatural entrepreneurial spirit, or something as simple as a great voice; these candidates typically proved to be smart hires, manufacturers noticed.

Roundtable attendees were willing to reevaluate the necessity of a bachelor’s degree. “An amazing candidate with a two-year degree—why box him out?” asked Humanscale’s Jon Strassner. Both

human resources professionals encouraged this mindset, citing the example of Silicon Valley, quick to embrace geniuses failed by the educational system (Steve Jobs, Bill Gates). Lisa Zarick also mentioned the nascent phenomenon of learning environments that teach students via real-world experience versus classrooms, the Experience Institute being one example. On-the-job experience is a much better indicator of attitude and intelligence than a 20-year-old B.A. at the bottom of a resume, all agreed.

One attendee, identifying herself as an out-of-the-box employee for her company, cautioned that—based on her own experience—organizations should adequately prep not only the newbie but their colleagues, too, who are often (understandably) skeptical of unconventional hires—especially those placed in newly created roles. And both sides must set realistic expectations: Employers must be willing to invest training and development resources, and the employee likewise must get up to speed quickly and do their homework about the design industry. Some noted that out-of-the-box hires are often not long for their new field, disillusioned with what they were getting into. Said Zarick, “We get asked to find someone with an unconventional background, and then, once they’re hired, the feedback is: ‘They don’t know how to write a brief, to take creative direction.’ Organizations need to ask themselves, ‘Do we have the infrastructure to support and train this person?’ Hiring them is the easy part.”

### Youthful edge

Another conduit for fresh, creativity-sparking perspectives—and that doesn’t entail going out of the box? Twenty-somethings with a modicum of design experience or training. Although some roundtable participants make a point of *not* hiring recent grads (who one designer deemed inadequately dexterous at shifting between tasks), others find them imminently moldable and unencumbered by bad training that needs to be reprogrammed. Employers praised their fresh viewpoints, questioning nature, strong technology skills, and novel thought processes. (Others doubtless like that they come cheaper than seasoned pros.)

The young guns who are getting hired in today’s economy typically have strong experience in particular computer programs or apps, be it CAD and Revit (for design firms) or social media (for

manufacturers). “For the junior design positions, it’s all about skill set,” said Studio O+A’s Primo Orpilla, Associate IIDA—a contrast to the reigning “culture-first” ethos for hiring senior staff members.

### Temp, perm, or probie?

Integral to any employment discussion is the notion of the temporary, contingent, or perma-lance worker. For all the cautious optimism about economic recovery, full-time employment opportunities are still scant. In fact, one of the fastest-growing sectors is temporary services—especially small, niche-based agencies—which in 2013 experienced an 85% growth rate. Some 33% of college graduates entered the workforce as a temp last year. “It’s what economists call a McJob market,” Durst described.

What was once a survival strategy—hiring freelancers on a project basis—is now embraced as a smart business practice by many design firms. Equally common is partnering, outsourcing, and teaming with outside consultants on a project or hourly basis as a way to expand a firm’s scope. “This allows us to be more lean and, more importantly, gives us access to skills we need—but don’t want to bring in-house permanently,” said Inscape’s Michael Fazio, Ind. IIDA.

Another common practice is a trial period for new employees. “We hire on a ‘prove yourself’ method: There will be a period of time for you to complete training in a field where you are potentially weak or untrained,” said Hierlinger. “Or, if we are uncertain about a candidate’s capacity and strengths, we hire below their salary requirement and review them within a set time period, at which point they’re either given their full salary requirement or let go.”

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**“The workplace is a mini-civilization: There are tribal elders, harvesters, hunter-gatherers. It has culture, community, conduct, code, a creed, and commerce—all the building blocks of a civilization. You are managing a civilization.”**  
**—Cheryl Durst**

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## Culture and teamwork

The recession and still-sluggish recovery have greatly impacted the design-industry workforce. The first consequence was a collective downsizing, during which organizations pared back to those staffers deemed most essential, most agile, and otherwise best equipped to handle volatility and generate new business. As economic pressure has softened, firms and manufacturers are rebuilding with this ideal super-employee in mind.

Moving forward, it will be increasingly important to consider not just whom we hire as individuals on their own terms, but also how they fit into the existing community—taking into account skill set, personality, chemistry, character, and more. The goal is to hire stellar candidates who mesh best with the corporate culture and current team members. A carefully calibrated mix of talents and a balance of extroverts and introverts, Gen Y and boomers, makes for the strongest team.

Of course, it is more complicated to hire with the group dynamic in mind, and something of a moving target given the fluidity and contingency of the current-day workforce. The key to ensuring that this diverse group also *gels* is to prioritize a fit with the corporate culture. Not only where it is now, but also where you hope it evolves to—something that can't be forced. "The true academic definition of culture is a very organic occurrence and can't be produced or manufactured," explained Bissonnette. "It is a cumulative knowledge by a group of people over time, a collective set of beliefs or behaviors. Versus something written in a brief and implemented."

## Hire for the team, hire for culture

As the industry evolves into a stronger team-based environment, synergy between employees is a must. Analyze current team members and target interview candidates who complement existing attributes; everyone should bring something unique to the table. Parallels between divergent skill sets enhance a team's richness and create a group that's diverse and agile. Candidates should care about both their own development as well as that of the team's.

Cultural fit is key to a successful hire, and the best way to foster workplace community. It's also a top new job title: Culture champion, brand champion,

and minister of culture are roles that didn't exist a few years ago, but that many of us are trying to fill—an indicator of how vital the cultivation of culture is for companies today. Fit is also important for prospective employees, for whom a job is not just a paycheck—it's also buying into a culture.

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## HOW WE'RE FINDING THEM

**U**nsurprisingly, firms are relying less on outside recruiters and more on word-of-mouth referrals and technology. From Facebook to LinkedIn, social media has dramatically impacted how designers and manufacturers scope (and suss) out talent. No single Web site or method is dominant; it's more about the combined impact of many research and outreach vehicles. Anne-Marie Gianoudis, IIDA, explained that Gresham Smith & Partners uses technology to "establish talent pipelines, initiate deeper networking, and reach both active and passive candidates." Other firms, like VOA Associates Incorporated, have developed in-house tools to augment their online outreach and refine their applicant pool: "We've implemented an electronic application process that is searchable by skill set and qualifications," helping managers earmark the most promising candidates, said the firm's Jeannette Leneer, IIDA.

Related industries have proved another fruitful poaching ground, especially when outside experience and a fresh viewpoint is welcomed, i.e. sales and marketing jobs. "We're recruiting on social media and looking in different places for people who will bring us a different perspective," said Milliken's Barbara Haaksma. That sentiment was shared by many manufacturers.

Managers are actively looking for good job candidates within their own organizations as well. Promoting from within offers numerous benefits. A current employee is, of course, a known entity, already tested and trained, and proven to fit within the corporate culture. Hiring an insider also sends a message to fellow employees that hard work is rewarded; today, promotions are generally based

on contribution and potential rather than on time served. Hiring from within also allows management to show employees what kind of traits are valued at the company: “When you promote, you tell people that this person has the attributes of ‘the tribe,’” said Gensler’s James Williamson, IIDA.

A title upgrade is also a way to acknowledge and motivate employees in situations where the firm may not be able to give an adequate salary boost. “When there is less opportunity for growth in the traditional sense, it is critical that team members are engaged and feel as though they are contributing,” said Tarkett’s Jeff Krejsa.

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## HOW WE’RE INTERVIEWING THEM

**T**he face-to-face interview process is increasingly important in an age when job candidates are savvy about self-marketing, self-branding, and self-spinning. A one-on-one conversation about professional goals, personal beliefs, and problem-solving approach is the most accurate predictor of fit—not a glossy resume or carefully crafted online presence. “Nine times out of 10, the best candidate was not the one that looked best on paper,” noted Perkins + Will’s Christy Cain, IIDA.

### The interview as extreme sport

The interview process has become protracted, a test of endurance for the candidate *and* the firm. “We are interviewing more carefully and conservatively, devoting more time to the search and the interview process,” said Braga. To gain a more accurate picture of candidates, companies typically subject them to multiple rounds of interviews and have numerous staffers meet them along the way. This helps managers generate more feedback about the interviewee while giving the latter a nuanced picture of the company they’re interviewing at. “That ensures that we have a stronger feel for the candidate and that they have a clearer picture of our culture,” said Shaw’s John Stephens, Ind. IIDA.

Although this immersive, 360-degree process ultimately benefits both parties, it’s not always pleasurable for antsy candidates—and often causes them to commit elsewhere. Krejsa described his own job interview, years ago, which lasted about six months. “Our current interviewees don’t have the patience for that,” he said. “We need to figure out a way to get to that chemistry quicker.”

### Hire now, write job description later

In other instances, the hiring process becomes extremely truncated, especially when interviewers are empowered to go with their gut instinct. Many senior managers copped to being “trigger happy” when they find someone great—even if that candidate is not a perfect fit for the particular job they’re trying out for. “We are doing more hiring when we find the right fit, knowing we will find the right role for them once they’re in,” said Lenear. Apparently, this is a rising trend. “It’s the notion of work-experience design: being hired for your skills versus for a particular job,” said Zarick. “Matching a person’s skills with the needs of the organization will help us be more fluid in terms of answering volatility.”

### Less reliance on profiling tools

Some organizations used personality-assessment tools, profile testing, and/or psychological profiling as part of their interview process, although it was the exception to the rule and more common among manufacturers. When tests *are* administered, the results are just one part of the puzzle, weighed with other factors. “Recently, someone who scored the highest [on our profile test] was 10 years too junior for the job,” noted Krejsa. “The takeaway: He was the right person for the culture of our organization but the wrong person for the job. So we maneuvered and found a spot where he did fit.”

Others use profiling to manage employees once hired. “They help me understand the best way to get through to people when coaching them,” said Haworth’s Michelle Kleyla. “I get a lexicon of their language and learn to speak it.” Instruments like DISK and Myers-Briggs are typically used to develop a deeper understanding of personality and work styles, enabling staffers to communicate with each other more effectively. At Interface, employees are administered StrengthsFinder within a year of being hired. “It gets attached to your profile and is publicly accessible for everyone in the organization

to see,” said the company’s Jennifer Busch, Hon. IIDA. “So if you are not connecting with someone you’re working with, you can check it out. We don’t use StrengthsFinder to classify employees but to help them communicate, and to put people together who work well together—who complement each others’ strengths and weaknesses.”

### The go-to interview question

Many questions attendees mentioned during the weekend’s discussion (or submitted in their “homework”) are conceived to gain insight into one of the following: problem-solving ability, flexibility, passions, and character as it pertains to cultural fit. All were highly curious about what questions others have found to be successful indicators of those attributes. Most fell under a handful of categories:

- **Behavior-based interviewing:** Asking candidates to explain—and offer concrete examples of—how they dealt with frustration, failure, constraints, challenges, risks, or rules on the job.
- **Big-picture queries:** Where they see themselves in five to ten years, where they see the industry in the same timeframe—and how they intend to influence it.
- **Demonstration of problems overcome:** “Show me in your portfolio a place where you circumvented a problem or overcame a challenge.”
- **Examples of past successes** (a big win, a project they’re most proud of) as an indicator of personal goals and values.
- **Demonstration of fears and passions:** “In your current position, what keeps you up at night and what gets you up in the morning?”
- **Personal interests outside of work.** “Insight comes from trying to understand what is important to them, aside from having a job, and how they connect to culture at large.”
- **Outward-focused questions:** “What characteristics do you appreciate in your teammates?” Their personal definition of leadership and expected attributes of an effective leader. Examples of when they have mentored or contributed to the growth of a colleague or underling.

Questioning isn’t the only way to deduce a candidate’s character, of course. Rick Valicenti likes to learn about people through provocation. He deliberately destabilizes interviewees or potential collaborators to see how they respond in real-world scenarios. “I am quick to be disruptive, and it’s in that disruptive phase that I can judge someone’s reaction. Their response is an indication of how flexible they are.”

### Turning the tables: The interviewee as interviewer

Interviewers should be prepared to answer some hard questions themselves. It’s expected—and even desired—that the interviewee will ask pointed questions about firm culture, character, and values. High-caliber interviewees are showing up more prepared and doing their homework. “When they know more about you than you know about them, it creates a different give and take,” said Krejsa. Shaw’s Stephens agreed. “If they are not interviewing me and asking questions that require transparency, then that interview doesn’t last long. Understanding the company and the culture on the front end is a critical part of the process.”

In particular, interview candidates are becoming increasingly interested in the ethical stance and philanthropic efforts of potential employers. One of the top questions candidates ask during the interview process, particularly from the under-25 set: “What are your corporate philosophical goals and aims?” Orpilla noted that this is especially true in the tech sector. “Silicon Valley companies are vetted prior to a candidate sending in a resume; applicants know the culture and philosophy before they even apply.”

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## HOW WE’RE MANAGING THEM

**T**he character of the new workforce—youthful, outgoing, mobile, self-directed, socially mediated—inspires a host of new management issues. Further complicating matters are stressors placed on time- and resources-strapped managers themselves, pressured to chase new business and spearhead client projects while attending to the diverse needs of both individual employees and the team dynamic.

## Leading leaders

Organizations value strong leaders and, as a result, they now dominate the workforce. “Leadership, which in the past has been defined as people who rise in an organization, will shift to *everyone* needing to be more of a leader; it will have nothing to do with title or position,” said Tang Peters. “You have to look at everyone as a potential developing leader.” Added Zarick, “We call it ‘leaders at all levels’ and that’s how we set expectations.””

So how do you lead a group of self-leading leaders? One popular option is to embrace a collective structure and communal decision-making chain. “We weigh lots of opinions, and everyone as a group decides what to do—versus it coming from just one person, top-down,” explained Hierlinger. “That way, it’s not just me as design director coming up with great ideas for my team to celebrate; it’s their ideas as a collective group, and they buy into them more readily.” Many people mentioned the importance of employees feeling engaged and empowered, and one even noted that they include the next generation of leaders in their strategic planning efforts.

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### “Salary does not come from the cloud.” —Scott Hierlinger

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One unintended consequence of this collective leadership approach, however, is that some people are left unsure of their role in the pecking order. Older employees—boomers in particular—can feel challenged by younger staffers empowered to voice their opinions. “People really have to understand their roles, which is not always easy,” said Stephens. He cited the popularity of *Downton Abbey*—depicting an era with strictly defined roles—as evidence of our subconscious ambiguity about the dismantling of the corporate food chain. Perhaps that’s why some forecasters predict the return of a certain level of formality and protocol observance in the workplace—a buttoned-up backlash to the casual-Friday phenomenon and the structural flatness.

## The bottom line is still tops

The economy may be resurgent, but pressure to win projects and generate sales has not leavened—

especially as firms’ salary bases have risen. “Now you have talented people who are not cheap,” said Hierlinger. “So the pressure on design directors to sustain all those people is much greater.” Added Mohawk Group’s Chris Stulpin, Ind. IIDA, “I love that we are embracing humanity, but we also have to bring in business.” Indeed, for all the lionizing of character and integrity in our job candidates, business acumen, strategic thinking, and other factors that feed the bottom line are still vital. Hires need to be capable of generating profit, and managers must be clear about business-development expectations. Many firms instituted a culture of metrics and achievement to deal with volatility; now managers are making those metrics—as well as overall business goals—more transparent to underlings to ensure everyone gets on board. “The more every employee knows about what’s going on, the more they buy into what you’re doing,” said Hierlinger.

## Less (but smarter) management

By staffing the workplace with independent, self-guided employees, directors and senior leaders hope to lighten their day-to-day management burden: less human-resources issues and paper pushing, more designing and/or client interaction. The strategy has largely succeeded.

A more collective, laissez-faire management style shouldn’t veer *too* hands-off, however; regular check-ins with the team are still essential for morale and motivation. Think *smarter* management, not *less* management. Orpilla offered a cautionary tale about his own firm, which recently enlisted a coach to help navigate issues resulting from rapid growth—namely, a staff that felt under-managed by stretched-thin superiors. “We had to recalibrate the office, shifting teams frequently, having monthly manager check-ins, and creating player/coach-style mentoring relations so everyone feels a part of things,” he said. The result: His firm is stronger than ever.

## Embracing (and encouraging) introverts

The contemporary workforce exalts a certain type: the extrovert. Not just the extrovert’s outgoing and personable nature, but also his or her ability to feed off, and draw energy from, interpersonal relations. This type of person thrives in an open-plan office, with its forced socializing, and in a communally led environment where, to get ahead, you must feel comfortable asserting yourself. In

January, a study released by TK who reported that those who talk the most get paid the most. “It’s the Western business way: Don’t be shy! Take charge! Speak up!” said Tang Peters. “But sometimes we overlook people who are less visible, less vocal, more behind-the-scenes.”

That’s changing, as our culture is starting to recognize the value and complementary skills that introverts—with their preternatural flair and high tolerance for heads-down work like coding and CAD-ing—bring to the workplace. The challenge for managers is to let introverts be themselves, without forcing them into unwanted roles in client relations or leadership. “We shouldn’t make someone be something they don’t want to be,” said Tang Peters.

One strategy is to leave well enough alone and let introverts be introverts. But many raised the possibility that sometimes what looks like introversion is simply inexperience coupled with insecurity, which is a leadership issue. Lax mentoring is a major culprit. What to do with employees who exhibit great leadership or presentation skills within the office, but are hesitant to flex them on a larger stage? “Even if some people don’t see themselves as leadership, how do we create room for them and teach them to aspire to that?” asked Zarick.

Whether a byproduct of DNA or inadequate mentorship, introversion is something managers will increasingly have to deal with: The rise in homeschooling and the ascendance of digital communication at the expense of face time conspire to dull people skills. “There is a loss of the ability to know when to get up from behind your computer and resolve something in person versus email,” said McDermott. The onus will fall on management to teach skills that were once learned in school.

### **Mentoring needs...mentoring**

As a result of a less hierarchical and more transparent and accessible management styles across the board, mentorship is happening more organically, spontaneously, and individually—and even more symbiotically. “It’s not this linear thing,” noted Felice Silverman, IIDA, of Silverman Trykowski Associates. “It’s more fluid, who’s bringing what to the table.”

Some design firms have given up traditional mentoring for a grassroots approach. Orpilla explained how O+A puts pedagogy into place in lieu of a for-

mal program. “We kind of force scenarios, putting people together. Even though it takes more time and effort, it pays dividends.”

But lest these more casual, informal practices/policies are managed and attended to with care, certain people fall through the cracks, often those who could most benefit from mentoring: introverts, minorities, foreign-born staffers, and even baby boomers. IIDA surveys reveal that, industry-wide, young designers are not being mentored, and diversity (in all forms) is inadequately nurtured. Attendees recognized the need for mentorship programs to evolve and become more nuanced, addressing rising concerns like cultural and generational differences in communication styles.

### **The multigenerational workforce**

Reverse mentoring is becoming increasingly important as knowledge of technology divides generations into microcultures. As more staffers of retirement age choose to prolong their careers, finding roles where they can continue to effectively contribute while opening opportunities for others is key. “The most difficult mentoring is someone who’s been at a firm for 30 years—and still needs mentoring,” noted Hollander Design Group’s Viveca Bissonette, FIIDA. Reverse mentoring is also an effective strategy to abet knowledge transfer and succession planning in an increasingly fluid workforce.

The multigenerational staff is here to stay and is a common bugaboo for managers, who have to be multilingual—i.e. capable of speaking to different generations’ styles. “Most of us have three or four generations in the workforce—veterans, boomers, Gen X, and Gen Y—all with different needs and wants, and all of which influence each other,” explained Zarick. Management today means being able to motivate and collaborate across generational divides. It’s not just day-to-day management and interpersonal interactions that prove vexing in this scenario. In addition to figuring out how to manage each generation effectively, leaders are also challenged to tailor benefits packages—and even the format of professional development tools, as each age bracket prefers a different teaching style (generally speaking, Gen X likes being lectured to, Gen Y likes receiving information in interactive snippets).

The intergenerational dynamic will continue to shift as millennials ascend the ladder and boomers age

out—making knowledge transfer and succession planning imperative to an organization’s stability and longevity. A corporate client of Tang Peters’s found that out the hard way: Going through a recalculation, the company found itself with no one left on staff who understood its brand foundation and was forced to call back a former senior executive from retirement to help.

### Investing in a fluid workforce

Although millennials have a reputation for being flighty and capricious, flitting from one job opportunity to the next, this cliché may be an oversimplification. “Folks just entering the workforce and who perhaps have been struggling to get a job are not commitment-phobic,” said Tang Peters. “They want to grab on and dig in and have security. They want to work hard and they want to work a lot. Which bumps up against the notion of the entitled millennial.”

Whether or not millennials prove to be more loyal than their reputation suggests, today’s workforce is much more fluid than that of even a decade ago. This effects how organizations are investing in development. “I’m often asked, ‘What if we spend money developing people and they leave?’ The answer is: Well, what if we don’t spend the money and they stay?” said Zarick. Development is a pay-off in and of itself—for however long an employee’s there. “We need to start asking, *‘How can I help Sally develop quickly and get the best value from her while she’s here because she probably won’t be here very long?’*” said Fazio.

Similarly, organizations are questioning how much energy to expend on retention. “That was always the goal, our HR mantra: to develop and retain,” continued Zarick. “But we have and will continue to have a fluid workforce. So do we focus effort and money on retention, or do we focus on engagement and productivity while they are with us?” It’s a subtle shift and a lot of the tools might be the same, but the outcome might be different, she concluded.

### Big data

Previous roundtables have addressed social media, especially its value as a sales, marketing, and branding tool. But this year the topic was framed as a management issue: how to set up and enforce appropriate guidelines for staffers’ use of social media. A few attendees wanted advice about mo-

tivating staffers to fulfill their social-media obligations—meeting their tweet quotas on the company feed, for instance. “It’s absolutely fine to ask people to participate,” said Zarick. “But you should give them guidelines and let them opt out unless it’s in their job description.”

But a bigger issue for the majority of roundtable participants was squelching promiscuous use of Facebook and the like. Many participants noted challenges they were having with how transparent offices can or should be—especially how much employees should be allowed to reveal on social media, in the age of over-sharing (2013 being the year of the selfie). “How people use social media in the workplace, and what they use it for, is a major concern—what staffers can put on social media, what we can access and how we get it,” intoned Zarick. The challenge is how to protect the needs of the organization while supporting the needs of individuals to express themselves and show their engagement in the workplace.

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**“Everything we do is carefully documented somewhere, to be found by someone we inevitably didn’t want to find it.” —Cheryl Durst**

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Many had issues with employees wanting to post intel on networking sites about projects they are working on—and thus prioritizing their needs to grow professionally over the privacy needs of both the firm and the client, whose nondisclosure agreements they are contractually obligated to uphold. “Legally, employees’ social presence is theirs,” said Zarick. “We have a policy that says, ‘Don’t be stupid.’ But that is an incredibly grey area.” At Leo Burnett, she said, HR professionals get involved when a Facebook or Instagram post or a tweet relates to a client, a client work product, or is potentially damaging to the agency. Other managers have mitigated this problem by offering robust mechanisms for collaborating, chatting, and networking internally—intranets and IM being the most popular.

A related concern treads on Big Brother territory: how much we know about employees via publicly

accessible social media, and what we do with that information. Zarick called it “big data,” and explained the legal, individual, and HR ramifications. “The idea of ‘how much can we know about you in order to get you to buy our product’ can be turned internally, morphing into getting a better understanding of an employee’s strengths and weaknesses—what’s called the ‘quantified employee.’ What should or can we do with that info from a moral, legal, and privacy standpoint? You can use it for good or evil.” (No wonder prospective employees are asking serious questions about a company’s ethics and values prior to signing on.) The safeguarding of digital information is vital in an increasingly transparent culture.

Of course, in a fully transparent organization, quantified employees have access to the company’s data on them: “You know why you are billable, why you are employed,” said Durst. “That information is no longer shared on a need-to-know basis. Which makes human resource’s lives hell!”

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**“Work isn’t a place you go, it’s a thing you do.” —Kyler Queen**

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### Managing mobility

Today’s mobile work methods are accepted (if not always enthusiastically) by even the most conservative organizations, especially as the gadgets and tools used to abet it—GoToMeeting, GoogleHangout, Evernote, instant messaging, computer cams—become commonplace. Ehscheid explained that a majority of his Bank of America design team works remotely; many he sees in person just once or twice a year. “I work with hundreds of people I never see or have never met.” Motivating staffers from afar is his primary management challenge, one he’s largely overcome by hiring the right people.

Pedro Ayala, IIDA, too, is a model of mobility, empowered by Kimball to work anywhere he can plug in: “I am more productive working at home, in my ‘house pants,’ than in the office,” he explained. “Twenty years ago, a desk was where you executed your work; now, work is more a state of mind.” Indeed, many mentioned that they are having to manage more remotely (via computer, phone, Face-

Time, Skype) due to increased meetings, off-site work, and clients in different time zones. Managers have become even more dependent on technology to bridge this gap. “I’ve found that more functional conversations and direction can happen through technology—Lync, Webex, etc.—while more individual, personal dialogue is still necessary in direct, face-to-face conversations,” said Krejsa.

Although mobility is liberating on many levels, it’s also a golden shackle, inhibiting us from ever truly unplugging—and thus intensifying the burnout caused by an oppressive workload. “‘I’m off the clock’ is a concept we all need to get back to,” Krejsa continued. Not just us and our employees, but also our clients: “Their expectations can be almost abusive,” said Klawiter & Associates’s Susanne Molina, IIDA, citing one client who went ballistic when a nonurgent late-night email went unanswered until the next morning. Such expectations make it hard to unplug: “In my demographic, we are always working on our devices, even at 11 PM.”

Work/life boundary-setting was considered a necessity for one’s sanity, despite that the 9-to-5 workday is something of a vestigial concept. “The idea of time barriers—that things start and stop at certain times—is a carryover from the industrial era,” said Shapiro. “As the nature of what it means to go to work changes, the pressure of having to establish specific times when you are not working starts to go away. You start to achieve a *blend* versus a *balance*.” He sees this quality in millennials. “Younger people want to do a little more living at work, but at home they might do a little more work,” he observed. “And over the same timespan, we probably accomplish the same amount of work.”

For some people, though, a “blend” makes it feel like work is *all* we do; the specter of work is cast on our downtime. Indeed, what many battle is perception: How many hours are we really working compared to how many it feels like? Is our fatigue and ennui out of proportion to how much we actually *are* working? Possibly we’re deluding ourselves and working less than we think we are, yet we’re always exhausted because we’re never 100% off.

But for most of us, the opposite is true: We’re both more productive working remotely *and* we’re spending more hours of the day working. Something obviously has to change, since burnout (of

self and staff) was cited as a primary HR and management concern. Another challenge is managing the divide—and the distrust and skepticism—between those who work remotely and those who opt out when an organization supports both methodologies. “There is the perception that satellite workers are not working hard, that the level and quality of work is different when you aren’t seen,” noted Durst. It is the responsibility of managers to set the tone. But too often that duty falls on employees to defend themselves—or to be silently embittered about how their hard work is exploited and under-acknowledged. Not exactly a recipe for a happy and empowered workforce.

### Manage for the team, manage for culture

The ideal leadership style is more akin to coaching than managing: Communicate big-picture strategy and business goals and get employees to buy into those goals but also encourage autonomy. Create a flexible structure that accommodates different work styles and enables more personal goals to be supported, encouraging the team to work at their own strengths to leverage those goals. Manage collaboratively and push ownership and accountability downward, dispersing power.

Many attendees were navigating cultural change, whether experiencing a restructuring, a merger, or strategic planning. Some were preoccupied with getting long-time staffers to embrace a changing culture, while others with communicating an existing culture to newer staffers. It’s important to share organizational aspirations with everyone, at every level, and empower employees to weigh in on broader decisions about big-picture direction.

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## CONCLUSION: WHERE WE WORK MATTERS

**D**oes place still matter? Despite the unstoppable momentum toward mobility and itinerancy, physical office space still very much matters—even when it’s just a locus for occasional face-to-face

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**Q: “How do you maintain order in an agile environment?”**

**A: “You don’t! Take pictures and get out!” –Rob Moylan**

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collaboration and a physical site to host the technological infrastructure that abets working remotely. “The workplace environment traditionally had everything to do with how the work community interacts,” said Tang Peters. “The value of space is about community, the human connection.”

### The agile environment and the open-plan backlash

The rise of the open-plan office continues apace, spurred on by cultural trends and cost-consciousness. But what’s hailed as a management boon—a design scheme that, at its best, encourages communication, transparency, and the dismantling of hierarchies—too often becomes a management *liability*, undermining concentration, inhibiting productivity, and draining morale. Many yearned for a recalibrated ratio between open communal areas and enclosed focus spaces—whether the latter is dedicated, shared, or able to be booked. Cain cited a recent Herman Miller study she’d read concluding that the private office was where the majority of us like to be and where we get our best work accomplished. “But what people want—privacy, focus space—is very different than what they are getting,” lamented Silverman.

Openness is just one part of the delicate open-office ecosystem. “When the phenomenon started, back in the early 1990’s, research advocated that team rooms and phone booths were needed to complement the openness,” explained Molina. “Companies saw they could reduce the RE but didn’t implement the whole concept: ‘I want this but not that.’ They didn’t embrace the right ratios,” instead cherry-picking the attribute they liked best, i.e. density. And that disproportionate allocation of enclosure to openness got perpetuated. “We are now looking at densification, not just from a real-estate and financial perspective, but also what it does to the morale, humanity, and culture of an organization,” noted Kleyla.

Designers and manufacturers agreed that openness can and should take many forms within an office, from quasi-cubicles and benching systems to pods and informal breakout zones. “The research we’re doing suggests it’s important to provide variety; you can’t bench everybody,” Kleyla added. Staffers want to be able to work in different kinds of settings throughout the day.

Sometimes, that setting is home. Mobility was frequently mentioned not as an end goal but as a survival tactic for getting work done. “A more open and agile environment has made everyone more accessible, but comes at the expense of ability to concentrate,” said Fazio. “One strategy employed by both managers and staff alike is to frequently work at home or other off-site locations to get focused work done.” Which raises a chicken-and-egg question: Did the rise of mobile working liberate the workplace to become more open and collaborative? Or did the open-plan office—and the productivity challenges it creates—force us to turn to remote working?

### **Walking the talk (or not)**

Participants were asked whether their own work environment had changed over the last few years. A common answer was: “Perhaps not as much as it should have considering the leading-edge spaces we are realizing for our clients.” For every design firm or manufacturer who’s embraced agility—creating more teaming spaces and two- to three-person workrooms—there were two more with a hierarchical, cubicle-and-corner-office environment.

Still, there were those who walked the talk. Haworth has been experimenting with unassigned seating. Many others have embraced benching. Hollander Design Group treats its office as a working prototype, said Bissonnette. “We are using our own space as a lab to discover the best ways to increase productivity and satisfaction—for ourselves as well as for our clients.”

One facet of the officescape that has changed for everybody: cutting-edge technology and its seamless integration into the interior design. Two screens per desk is common, most work on giant flat-screens, and a variety of programs, apps, and personal gadgets were credited as essential to daily work.

### **The effect of physical space on management**

By and large, designers and manufacturers thought that workspace makeovers had little impact on big-picture leadership practices. “The design of our office has changed dramatically: more collaborative, more options for different work situations, more flexible,” said Haaksma. “It hasn’t really changed how I manage, but it definitely has driven how people engage with each other and the conversations that take place.” Others agreed: Openness and agility unsurprisingly encourage teamwork, collaboration, and more informal conversations—especially in offices with abundant or newly expanded meeting space. If anything, management has become more organic, transparent, and in the moment—less forced, more spontaneous. “A lot more managing happens out in the studio as opposed to behind a door,” said Moylan.

It was acknowledged, however, that managers working in open, agile spaces are called upon to do more mundane policing, running interference when individuals have trouble concentrating or disrespect colleagues’ personal space and aural boundaries. “We’re having to deal more with personality issues—noise transmission, courtesy to neighbors,” said Molina. “And more people using headphones and not being able to hear someone talking to them until they see them.”

### **Culture and change management**

In the modern workplace, agility is a desired spatial attribute. Yet it’s often misunderstood or under considered by clients, perceived as a shortcut for change, single-handedly capable of making an organization more accessible, transparent, and nonhierarchical. Space itself cannot instigate cultural change; it can only support what’s already in place. “Design can do a lot to propel change,” said Orpilla. “The culture can be self-corrective and adaptive if you give the organization the right pieces. If there is a willingness to change, that is the first step. But the client has to understand that it’s their culture to manage.”

Designers and manufacturers find they must work hard to manage expectations. “I always ask, ‘Are you really prepared to have your employees playing Ping-Pong at 10 AM?’ Because when you install a Ping-Pong table in the middle of the office, that’s what’s going to happen,” Orpilla explained. Of

course, sometimes the opposite is true: If you build it, they won't come. Silverman recently created an informal collaboration space in her office that no one used until senior leaders began programming it. "It took that push on our side to make it work. Younger people needed to know upper management was OK with them using it." It was an important reminder that the design process and change management have to start at the same time, "so that when the space is done, the people are ready for it," said Moylan. "They work hand in hand."

### **Design for the team, design for culture**

Both factors—culture and team—will be increasingly important to clients as well, and should be reflected in the spaces and furnishings designed for them.

Create a diversity of environments for different kinds of working and interaction, with the right type of open space that supports teamwork and dialogue, and that allows solo focus work, too. (The best athletic analog for office teamwork probably isn't soccer or basketball but a sport like swimming, wrestling, or gymnastics, where teamwork is essential to winning but individual performance, measured on individual terms, is key to overall success.) Create agile, adaptable, modular environments that can be reconfigured from hour to hour, day to day, and month to month as tasks and teams shift.

You've all heard it from clients: "I don't want you to create an interior, I want you to create a culture." But design can only *support* a culture or give it a framework; change management must be implemented to shift a culture, and even then it's often a slow and painful evolution. Stress the importance of change management to clients, and be equipped to help them with it. Put guidelines in place about how an agile office space should be used, and make sure clients are invested in and uphold them.



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# RESOURCES

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## BOOKS

**“Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us,”**  
Seth Godin

**“Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead,”** Sheryl Sandberg

**“You Are a Badass: How to Stop Doubting Your Greatness and Start Living an Awesome Life,”** Jen Sincero

**“Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that Can’t Stop Talking,”**  
Susan Cain

**“A Year Without Pants: WordPress.com and the Future of Work,”** Scott Berkun

**“The End of Big: How the Internet Makes David the New Goliath,”**  
Nicco Mele

**“Who Owns the Future?”** Jeron Lanier

**“Pivot Points: Five Decisions Every Successful Leader Must Make,”**  
Julia Tang Peters

**“The Attention Economy: Understanding the New Currency of Business,”**  
Thomas H. Davenport

**“The Circle,”** David Eggers

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## ARTICLES

**The edamame culture of hospitality:**  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/07/opinion/brooks-the-edamame-economy.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/07/opinion/brooks-the-edamame-economy.html?_r=0)

**Open office backlash:**  
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## APPS

QuizzUp

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## MOVIES

Her

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**PREVIOUS  
WHITEPAPERS**

<http://www.iida.org/content.cfm/iida-annual-industry-roundtable>

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**MANUFACTURER  
WEB SITES**

[www.alessi.com](http://www.alessi.com)  
[www.americanseating.com](http://www.americanseating.com)  
[www.crossvilleinc.com](http://www.crossvilleinc.com)  
[www.haworth.com](http://www.haworth.com)  
[www.humanscale.com](http://www.humanscale.com)  
[www.inscapesolutions.com](http://www.inscapesolutions.com)  
[www.interfaceglobal.com](http://www.interfaceglobal.com)  
[www.kimballoffice.com](http://www.kimballoffice.com)  
[www.mannington.com/commercial](http://www.mannington.com/commercial)  
[www.milliken.com](http://www.milliken.com)  
[www.themohawkgroup.com](http://www.themohawkgroup.com)  
[www.ofsbrands.com](http://www.ofsbrands.com)  
[www.shawcontractgroup.com](http://www.shawcontractgroup.com)  
[www.tarkett.com](http://www.tarkett.com)  
[www.wilsonart.com](http://www.wilsonart.com)

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## NOTES

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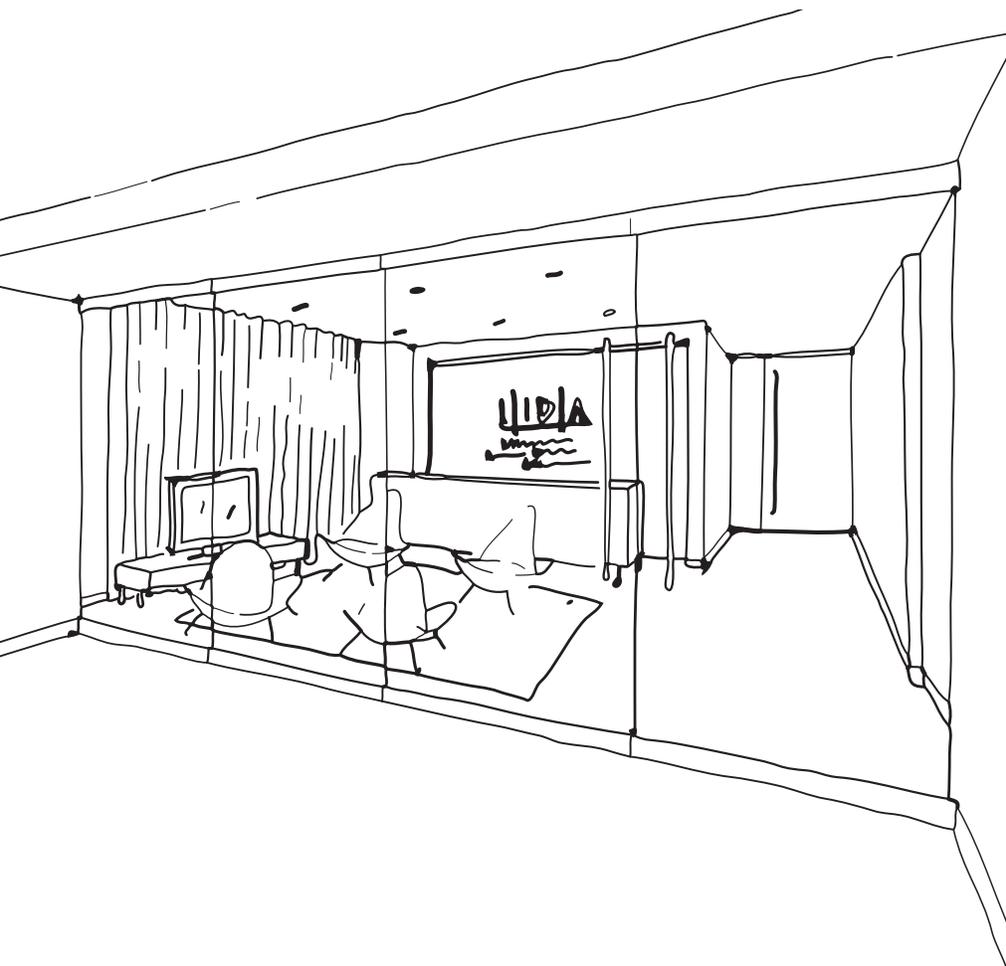


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# NOTES

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