

## **The office of the future**

### **Why the future office will be as much about fun as work**

Google's offices in Zurich have a massage room, an aquarium and a slide to deliver engineers smoothly and quickly to the canteen. At LinkedIn's Californian headquarters there is a music room with keyboards, drums, guitars and audio equipment. And allowing employees to bring their pets to work is increasingly common. So, when did our offices turn into playgrounds, and does this represent the new way of working?

A recent report from US software giant Citrix forecasts that, within a few years, 70% of American people will work away from the office as often as they work at a desk. "Offices are expensive and office space will decline," says Citrix vice president Jacqueline de Rojas. "That doesn't mean that the office will die, though. They'll become dynamic places of collaboration and connection because we are social animals and we need to come together sometimes," she adds.

So, how do you build a team from people who only see each other a couple of days a week? Easy. Let them socialize and have fun together!

Some companies are working hard to meet the challenges posed by new ways of working. They are re-designing their workplaces to make them both flexible and more attractive, fun places to be. Lego, for example, has introduced a system called 'activity-based working' at its London and Singapore offices. That means that nobody has a fixed desk anymore. Space is divided into flexible work zones with no fixed seating and no offices for managers. Employees who leave their workspace for more than one-and-a-half hours need to take all their things with them. Lego even has a department for 'new ways of working' and, according to senior director Sophie Patrikios, the experiment has gone well.

"In a recent survey, 88% of staff said they liked the choice of where to work. They have a choice of different settings to suit their activity or mood, including a quiet library, a lively social area with music, comfortable armchairs in cosy corners or big desks to share with team-mates. We've already seen that work is no longer somewhere you go, but something you do," Patrikios says. "A greater shift towards flexible working and people having multiple part-time roles, rather than a job for life, will accelerate the change. In the future, 'going to the office' will mean much more than just 'going to work'."

(source: The BBC)

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