

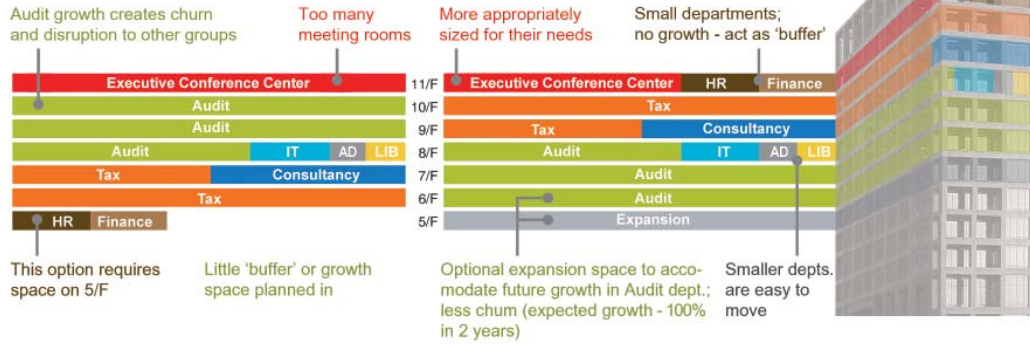
# Driving Change in the Workplace



The client advised M Moser Associates their preferred Stack Plan. However, after understanding the client needs, Planners then proposed an alternative option that would accommodate future growth, enhance flexibility and therefore reduce churn. The client saw the value it would create and agreed to implement it.

**Initial thinking**  
6.5 floors required; little room for future growth

**Alternative option after Strategic Planning**  
Only 6 floors required; optional full floor for future expansion



## Leverage Design Expertise to achieve Change in the Workplace

Business truly has become more diverse and Change intensive. In today's globalized world Change remains the only constant, and being able to adapt effectively is crucial to success.

In order to stay on the competitive edge, many forward-thinking companies are now using their workplace as powerful knowledge-sharing and staff attraction and retention tools.

On the other hand, business drivers such as mergers, consolidation of business units, lease expiries, technology and efficiencies will almost invariably involve change in the physical workplace.

To maximize the opportunities arising from workplace-related Change, early dialogue sessions with workplace specialists experienced in workplace design and creation are essential. Such discussions ensure correct decisions are made before

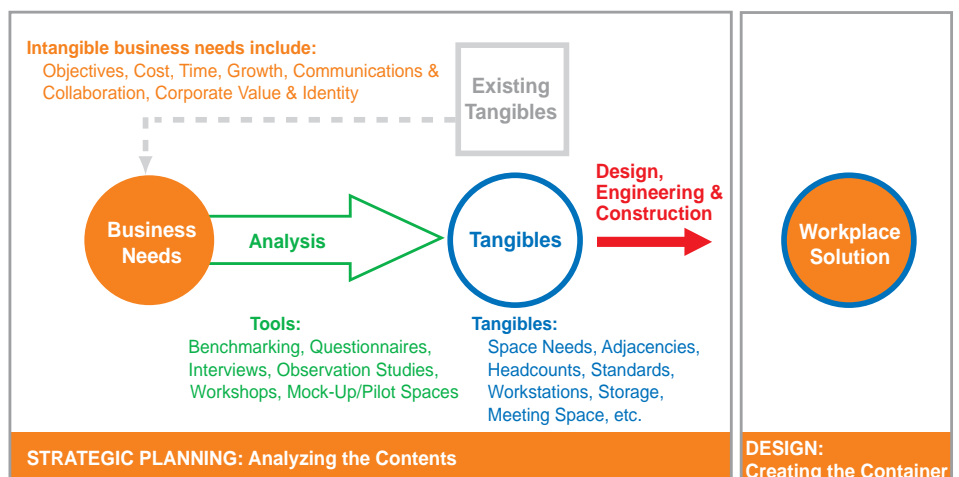
cost-binding choices, such as taking up or designing an inappropriate space, can impact the end result.

Ultimately, early integration of workplace specialists can help businesses to plan in flexibility and adopt modular workplace strategies that makes future change easier, less expensive and less disruptive to the business.

Using research processes to analyze intangible business goals, corporate culture and values and other underlying issues is fundamental to developing a brief that would ensure the right outcome for the business. To achieve this it is important that there is an interactive dialogue between client and Designers so that an understanding is developed that would result in a workplace solution that will fully support the client's short and long-term business objectives (see graphic below).

Correct workplace solutions cannot be achieved without first analyzing the business needs that underpin the project.

Before a design process is initiated, Strategic Workplace Planners enable clients to develop the 'contents' by analyzing business needs. Research tools such as Benchmarking, Questionnaires and Workshops help to discover the brief.



# Effectively communicate Change through the Design Process

The design process may be a highly effective mean of communicating Change to both management and staff, irrespectively if the decision making process is top-down or bottom-up or a combination.

A simple exercise that validates the effectiveness of a communications based approach is to ask participants at the start of an early Change Management meeting to switch seats without explanation.

Initial annoyance from the enforced seat change will quickly change into resistance followed by resignation and eventually acceptance.

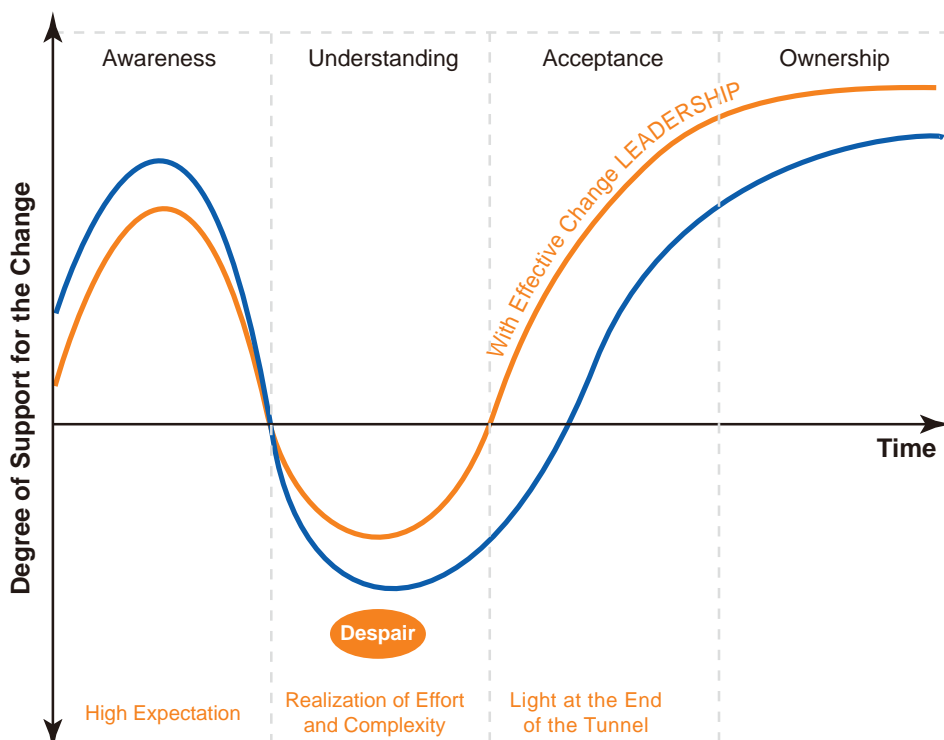
No matter how small the disruption, people want to know the reason for the Change. More worryingly, those not informed of the Change's potential upsides and downsides may create their own "worst case scenarios". This exercise is an almost exact microcosm of how people react to

Change within their working lives.

Management can facilitate understanding of Change by using "push-pull" communications tools that address the concerns of both management stakeholders and staff focus groups.

Such a process can be particularly valuable in obtaining crucial buy-in and resolving deadlocks and potential staff resistance-related issues such as employee churn, the loss of knowledge, lowered productivity and increased absenteeism, etc.

Companies are becoming increasingly aware that new corporate visions are more likely to succeed if the needs of those who must live with the changes are addressed early on. As a result, workplace Change has become a staff-focused rather than purely logistically-driven issue, with Corporate Communications, Human Resources, IT, Public Affairs and Security all now essential participants in the Change process.



The psychology of Change: People move from being enthusiastic at a project's outset to being wary before adapting and accepting Change. Effective Change Leadership can help to generate crucial early buy-in and reduce staff resistance-associated risk. The Design Process can be a highly effective mean to communicate to both management and staff, and therefore can be used as a tool to implement and communicate the Change initiative.



Before fully embracing a final design concept, management may well want to test and validate decisions or options. Pilot Spaces are an effective tool to validate a Design and to get final buy-in from all stake-holders.

## Pilot Spaces can help to further validate Change

Before fully embracing a final design concept, management may well want to validate the design with further testing of individual directions.

The building of a Pilot Space that mirrors the final office space enables staff to experience short-listed design options first-hand. This is an effective way of obtaining feedback to validate a design or in some cases management direction. Ultimately, such a space not only helps familiarize people with their future office but also enables them to be part of the design process, therefore achieving crucial buy-in.

The picture above shows an actual full-scale, one-floor Pilot Space recently commissioned by a client that wanted to change from a more enclosed traditional office to a more interactive and collaborative open plan.

The four-zoned prototype included enclosed and executive offices, individual

workstations, carpets, framing, filing and panelling systems.

A representative group of staff members was subsequently invited to tour the Pilot Space and comment on suitability and work productivity issues. Each option was rated using specific data regarding overall appearance, finish, quality price, etc.

Enabling the free exchange of ideas, doubts and anxieties with staff, this consensus-driven approach enabled the client to take understanding of the design to a new level of comprehension, consideration and eventual buy-in and validation of design direction.

Pilot Spaces supports management in the decision making process and helps to secure true consensus between multiple decision makers from different divisions or when a true understanding of the design needs to be achieved and a test run is desired.

# Change Checklist - Key steps undertaken in a recent project:

- Ensure clear vision, goals and scope of change
- Define success and risk factors
- Understand the leadership direction
- Know the audience and understand where the landmines are
- Agree the level of participation / user engagement

## 1

Agree and Develop the Strategy

### *BROAD issues are best communicated EARLY:*

- True reason for change
- Is it really a good idea?
- What are the benefits?
- What will and what will not change?
- When will it all happen?
- Where are we in the process?

## 2

Agree the 'Right' Information

### *More DETAILED issues are communicated LATER:*

- Does it mean I will have to work differently?
- Where will I sit?
- What will it look like?
- How much space / filing will I have?
- What support / training will I get?

### *How PUSH and PULL methods can be used to socialize key issues.*

## 3

Share Information and create Buy-in

### *Push methods are inexpensive ways of INFORMING a wide audience*

- Posters - include Q&A and a feedback opportunity
- E-mail Newsflash / Newsletter - from Project Sponsor
- Data Base / Web / Intranet - use a site to showcase designs, images etc.
- E-mails to advise of new pictures and materials

### *Pull methods are more resources-intensive, but ENGAGES more targeted groups with a higher effect*

- Interviews, Questionnaires
- Workshops and Focus Groups - activity based sessions; focus on key aspects of the planning that affect the change
- Town Hall Meetings - "short and sharp", should be Q&A based, Project Sponsor driven
- Site Visits - conduct site visits for those stakeholders most affected by the proposed changes
- Mock Up - Set up a mock up, staff groups to review / comment

- Implement agreed communication strategies and detailed schedule of push and pull activities

## 4

Execute



Design was used as a conduit to not only communicate change, but also to improve efficiency and collaboration. Ultimately the transition to change the working culture was achieved without staff consciously noticing which helped to create a smooth transition and minimized Change Management issues. The central staircase, here pictured, links staff internally and creates communication focal points that are conduits to knowledge sharing, collaboration and communication activities. The Design also helps to attract and retain top talent.

## A Case for Change

Consolidating four separate Hong Kong offices into one location created something of a quandary for a major International Bank's insurance subsidiary. Ultimately, the insurer was looking to create a communal bond that would bring their 220 office staff and 800 agents closer together. In doing so, the company also wanted to demonstrate its transparency and foster closer collaboration between its staff.

Before M Moser Associates began designing the new workspace, their Strategic Planning team embarked on an exhaustive research and analysis process. The backbone of this exercise was a series of interviews, questionnaires and feedback that both engaged staff in the change process and sought to establish what they wanted and needed from the new office.

Held over a four month period, the surveys, interviews, observation studies and creative workshops examined staff, needs and worries. Eventually, work patterns and departmental adjacencies emerged that could be addressed through, or supported by, the finished design.

This process played a vital role in both encouraging buy-in from key staff members and initializing initial bonding between departments which would need to collaborate more extensively in future.

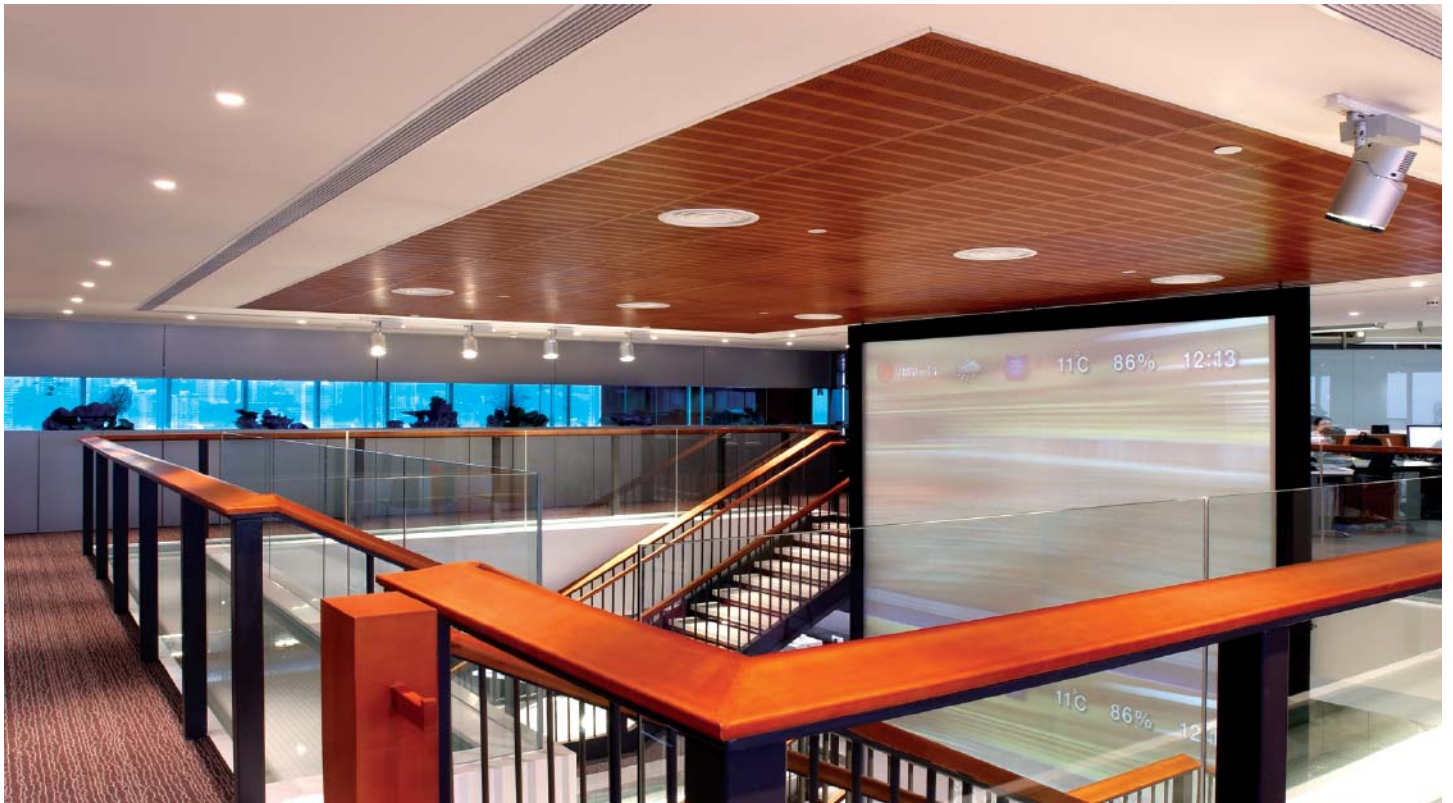
The company wanted to change the way it worked. "It is important that when we move we are ready to face not just a new and open environment but a new and open way of working together," said the CEO.

Collaboration and transparency was key and Designers envisaged that the focal point and area of most concentrated staff movement (see graphic on opposite page) would be a three-storey area that sought to seamlessly link staff internally.

As this atrium did not exist in the premises as leased, it had to be created. MMoser's Construction team punched through two floors and created a three-storey stairway with water features. Together with the M&E Engineering team the Designers envisaged an AV screen that stretched the length of the atrium to enable communication across all floors.

This high-tech access path linked employees with news and information and the space with its Audio Visual screen also allowed for large-scale meetings and corporate communications events, because the speaker or presentation slides can be projected on all floors (picture on opposite page).

To create day-to-day collaboration a number of lounges, meeting and breakout



spaces were built around the atrium that would serve as communal meeting places and encourage ad hoc gatherings.

The security of having one controlled entrance on the 36th floor meant that not only would the focal connection be the atrium but that people would move through the atrium to reach their desk, when they leave the office or when they meet in the breakout spaces. This ensures a constant flow of movement and provides opportunities to randomly meet and bond. The design, therefore, enhanced the constant flow of ideas and enabled people to share knowledge.

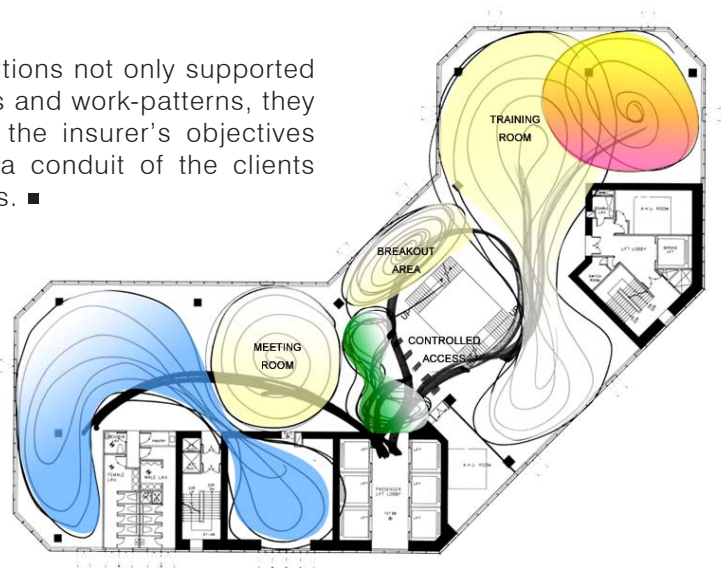
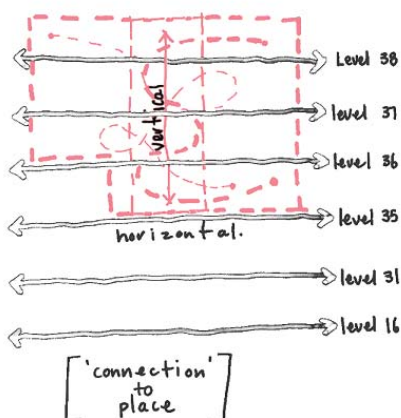
Responding to the random whims of inspiration, structural columns all over the office were designed as white boards and filing cabinets doubled as seating features, ensuring that virtually every part of the office was a conduit for proposing and sharing ideas and enhancing productivity levels.

The fact that the space was designed as an open plan unit also encouraged higher interaction, both visually and verbally. Flexibility and future growth was provided by designing the middle floor as a meeting drop-in center.

Staff attraction and retention levels were improved by creating a space that was modern, open, transparent, flexible, comfortable, and which supported staff's personal and professional needs.

The new office also accommodates and encourages team-based activities. With no closed offices abutting the floor to ceiling windows on any floor, all staff are free to enjoy natural light and stunning views.

These solutions not only supported staff needs and work-patterns, they supported the insurer's objectives and were a conduit of the clients core values. ■



For further information, [www.mmoser.com](http://www.mmoser.com).

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