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Using user requirements to achieve optimal office utilisation

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Abstract

- This research is based on principles of corporate real estate and facilities management to understand the current philosophy of work and life of office users. Modern workplace management influences modern corporations to manage their office spaces more economically while supporting office users to be more productively. The survey in offices across the UK confirmed that office users perceive about office satisfaction in different ways. Furthermore, this study tried to compare the existing workplace practice with the one preferred by the users. Based on the offices involved in this study, end-user requirements can potentially help saving 20% of the existing annual occupancy costs.

- **Keywords**: Office User Requirements, Workspace Allocation

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Background

- Workplace is recognised as the place that knowledge workers performing business activities and, sometimes, differently defined from various perspectives (Cairns, 2003).

- Becker (2001) mentioned that workplace can be an ecosystem developed to support people and the nature of their works.

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Background

- Haynes (2008) reveals that workplace environments consist of physical and behavioural aspects.

- The former consists of components that relate to the office occupiers' ability to physically connect with their work environment, while the latter consists of the components that relate to how well the occupiers connect with or impact on each other in psychological ways.

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Workplace in practice

Source: Hardy *et al.* (2008)

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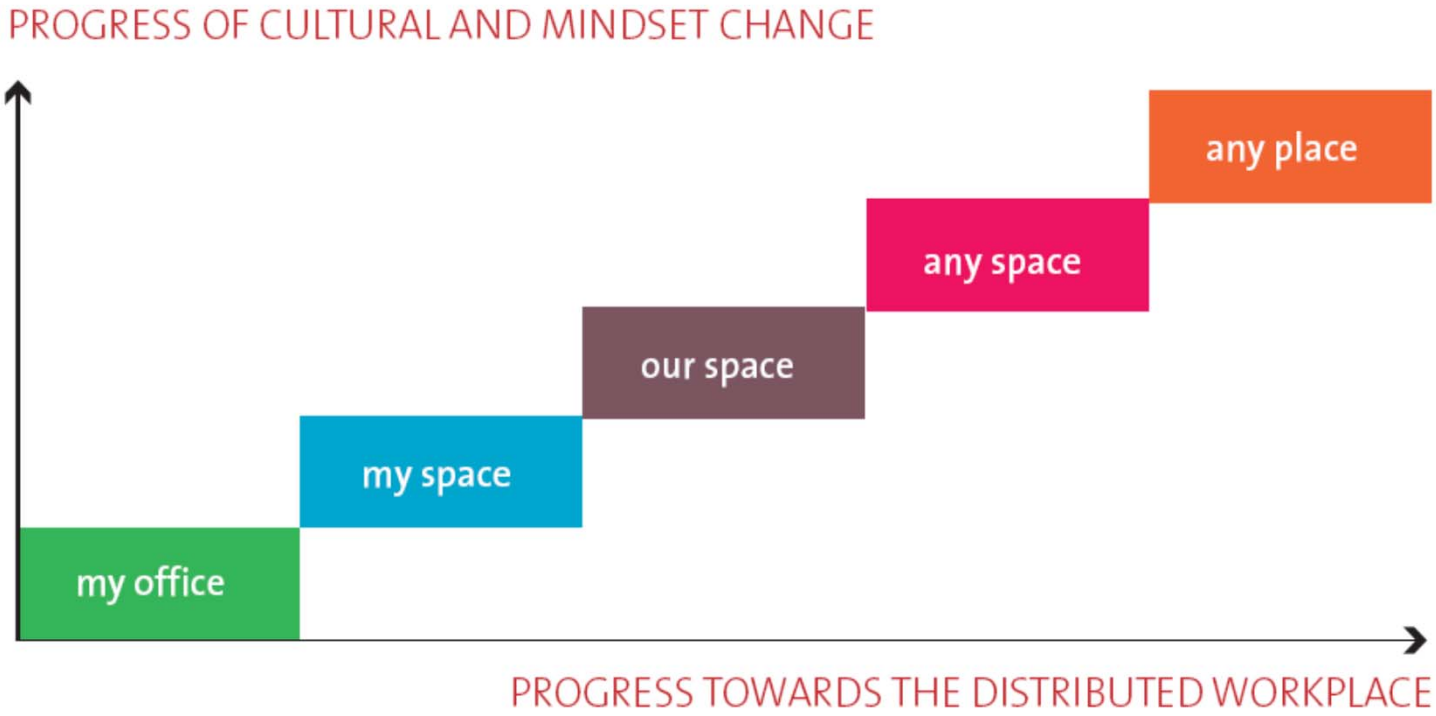
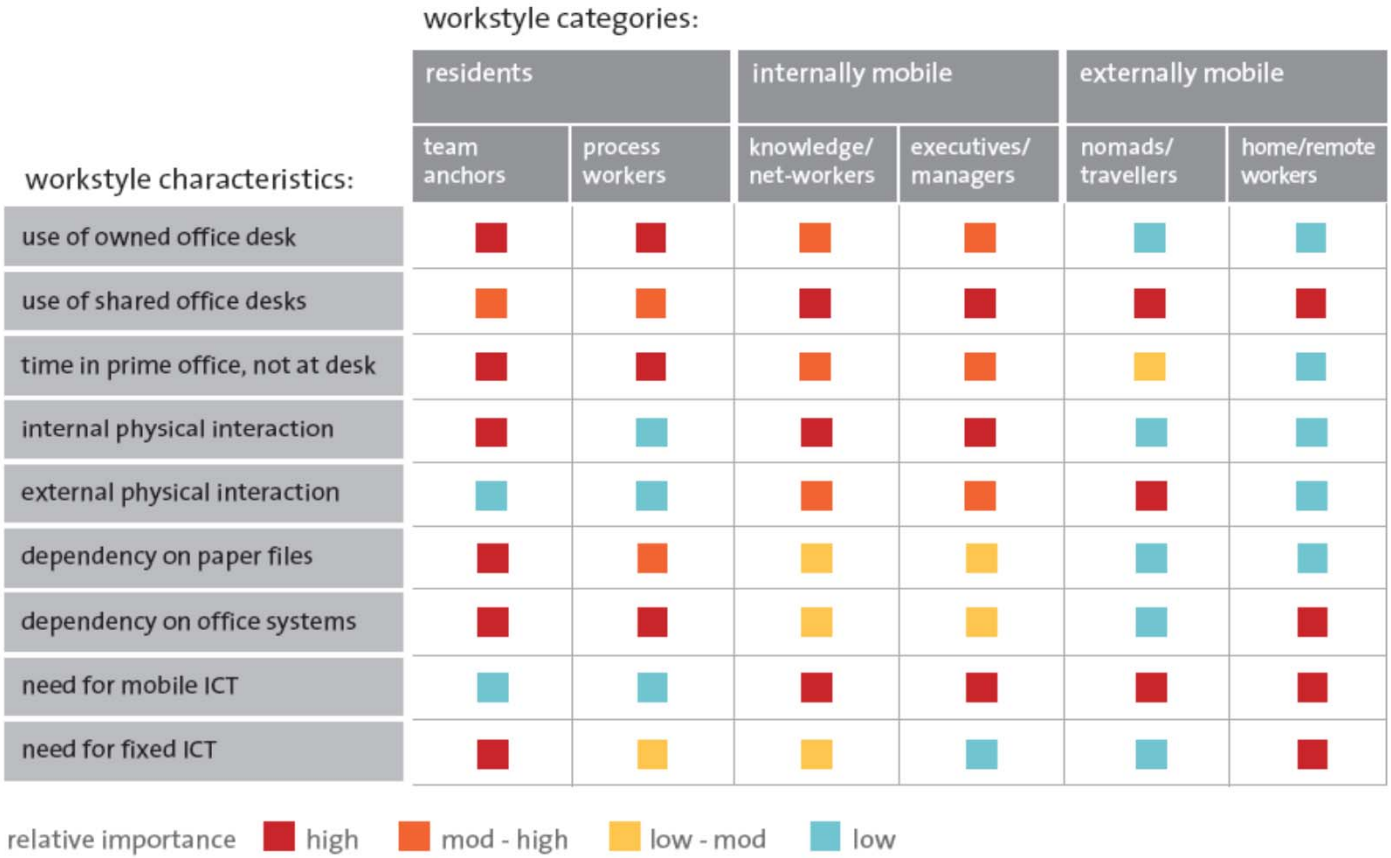
End-user characteristics



Source: Hardy *et al.* (2008)

Direct end-user requirements



Source: Hardy *et al.* (2008)

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Methodology

- The justification of the research approach reflected that this study needed a mixed methods approach.
- The employment of mixed qualitative and quantitative methods was considered as the most balanced position in achieving the optimal outcomes.
- Two questionnaire sets were developed to reach different sources of information namely workplace users and office/facilities managers.

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Methodology (cont.)

- Each office needs to provide multiple responses from its users and one response from the FM/office manager as the information was used in a multiple-case study.
- The office analysis scenarios were designed to understand the difference in space utilisation.
- The analysis proposed three office utilisation scenarios namely existing practice, property-centric practice and user-centric practice.

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Results

- Sixteen offices participating in this study are from Belfast, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Guildford, Liverpool, London and Newcastle

- More than 50% (9 offices) are based in the business area of Belfast City, while others are situated in the city centre areas.

- These offices reflect the quality of location as this factor implies to surrounding quality amenities and transportation convenience with high mobility.

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Results (cont.)

- The office-level analysis provides insights into the understanding of office properties and user characteristics as the offices can save up the occupancy costs 10%-20% by adopting user-centric approach.

- Economies of scale is apparent where larger offices can provide larger impacts while the smaller offices have a limited scale to maximise their office areas.

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Conclusions

- The office users can utilise their working time and space more effectively as their organisation employs the user-centric approach to design the workplace practice.

- The organisation can gain the benefits of workplace efficiency as the results show that almost every office participating in the study can reallocate workspace types and internal flexibility levels to achieve the reduced annual occupancy costs.