

# THE SUPER- EXPERIENCE

Designing for Talent  
in the Digital Workplace

A REPORT BY MIRVAC | *in partnership with* | WORKTECH ACADEMY

**WORK**  
REIMAGINED



# SUPER

*‘excellent, superb, superlative, first-rate, first class, superior, outstanding, remarkable, dazzling, marvellous, magnificent, wonderful, splendid, fine, exquisite, exceptional, glorious, sublime, peerless, perfect...’*

# EXPERIENCE

*‘an event or occurrence which leaves an impression on someone...’*

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Got feedback?  
We'd love to hear from you.

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# 01

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report looks at why experience is rising fast up the business agenda and how new experiences are driving change in the global workplace.

As the ante is upped in providing more and better workplace experiences, so we are entering the era of the super-experience – from UX to SX. This is defined as a heightened experience that is of superior quality, originality and impact, which stretches beyond clarity, logic and optimisation to embrace intrigue, curiosity and empathy, combining physical and digital elements. The elements of what makes a super-experience are considered by a range of experts.

Awe-inspiring experiences are discussed in the light of a body of scientific research suggesting that creating a sense of awe has many benefits in the workplace, and an array of new sound, light and sensor technologies bringing theatrical practices and sensations to the office.

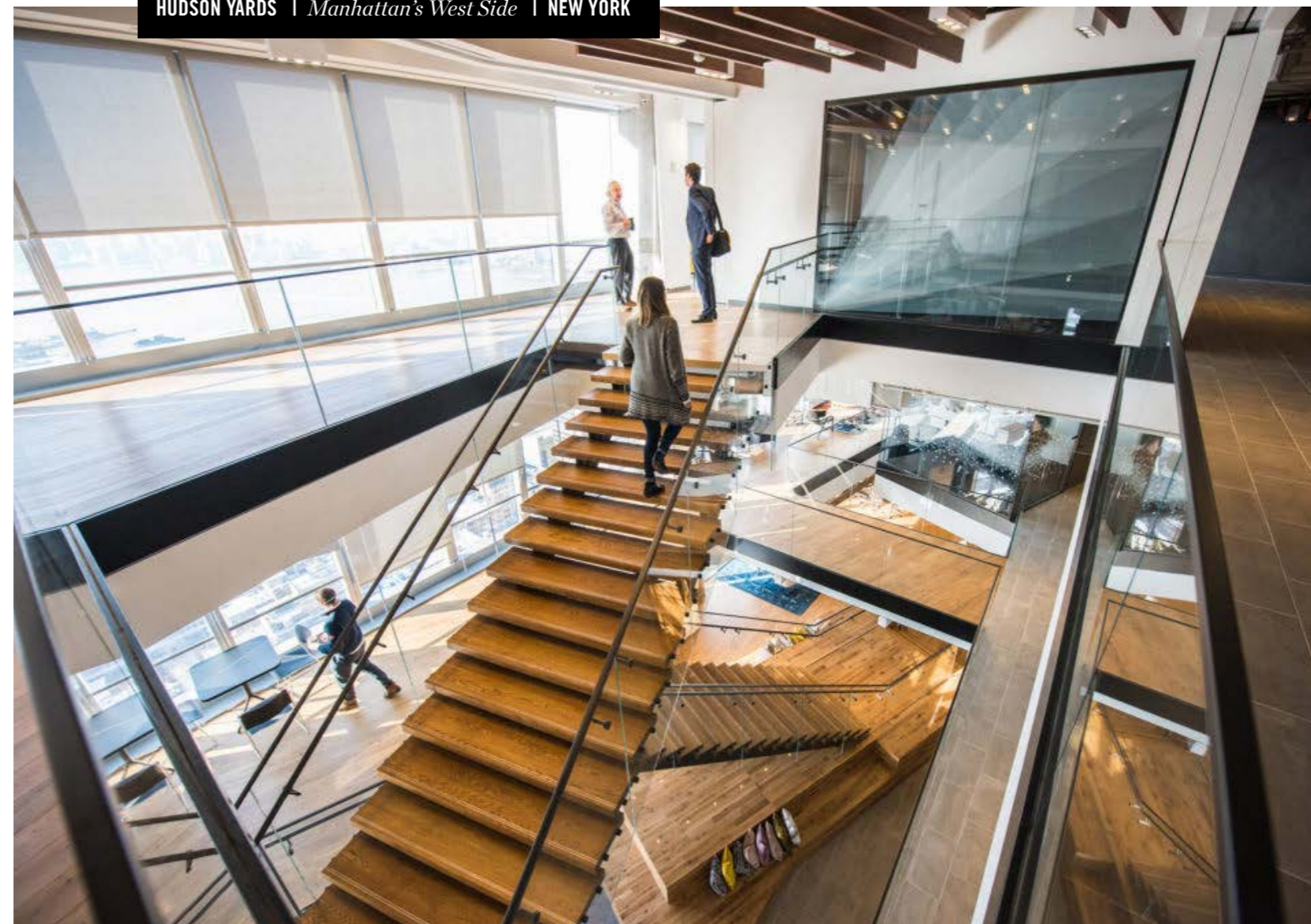
Curated experiences that creatively cluster people in 'experience guilds' according to skill, outlook and specialism, or engineer serendipitous 'bump' encounters, are examined. The success of the co-working movement in successfully managing experience and selling a service rather than space is a key part of this story. So is the rise of the smartphone, 'the office in your pocket' which will liberate people from being tied to one space and interact with smart workplace infrastructure.

The final section of the report looks at the role of dynamic social experiences in facilitating learning within organisations at a time when employees are required to update their skills and knowledge constantly amid rapid technological change.

Our 'Super-Experience' study concludes with a call from Mirvac to extend the conversation about the impact of experience design on the property industry and some tips on activating the super-experience. These include taking a people-first approach, offering a more flexible portfolio of experiences, and keeping an open mind on bringing in new skills and new technologies.

**CURATED EXPERIENCES THAT  
CREATIVELY CLUSTER PEOPLE IN  
'EXPERIENCE GUILDS' ACCORDING  
TO SKILL, OUTLOOK AND SPECIALISM,  
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'BUMP' ENCOUNTERS, ARE EXAMINED.**

HUDSON YARDS | *Manhattan's West Side* | NEW YORK



# 02

## WHY SUPER-EXPERIENCES?

In Joseph Heller's famous 1974 novel *Something Happened*, the interior monologue of a troubled businessman preparing for a promotion at work, the main character observes: 'It's a real problem to decide whether it's more boring to do something boring than to pass along everything boring that comes in to somebody else and then have nothing to do at all.'

It sums up a quintessential feature of the workplace as routine, dull and repetitive. One in which new experiences rarely come along. Indeed, in the 45 years since the novel was published, offices have barely improved in the quality of experience they provide, as people by and large do the same things, at the same time, in the same place, by the same route, day after working day. Basic functional considerations such as furnishing, ergonomics, layout, lighting and technology might have been upgraded but little specific consideration has been given to the wider experiential dimension of the workplace and its impact on behaviour, motivation and performance.

Photo Credit: Amazon

CLOUD FOREST | Amazon HQ | SEATTLE

### BIOPHILIA LINKED TO BRAIN FUNCTION

Tech giant Amazon incorporated a set of glass orbs filled with 'cloud forest' gardens into its Seattle headquarters, providing an impressive connection to nature for city-bound employees. A trio of connected spheres host 40,000 individual plants from all over the world, alongside work areas and meeting spaces for Amazon employees. This space, which is open to the community, acts as an oasis in the heart of the city. Biophilic design was used by Amazon to spark creativity and improve the brain function of employees.

# COMPANIES ARE PLAYING TO THE WELLBEING AGENDA WITH BIOPHILIC ENVIRONMENTS, CLEANER AIR, NATURAL DAYLIGHT, SOUNDSCAPES, STRESS HELPLINES, HEALTH CHECKS, RETREAT SPACES AND YOGA CLASSES.

### NEW JOB TITLES EMERGING

Today, however, the subject of workplace experience is rising fast up the business agenda. From a very low base – user experience simply wasn't on the map in most organisations a few years ago – there is now a thriving industry focused on it. There are even new job titles emerging inside organisations such as CEXO (Chief Experience Officer) or Vibe Manager with responsibility for improving the experience at work.

As a result, developers, designers and corporate occupiers of workspace find themselves in unfamiliar territory – no longer simply part of the global facilities industry but part of an 'experience economy'. For many property professionals who have long prided themselves on applying hard metrics to the built infrastructure, the idea that they should behave like a branch of the education, entertainment or hospitality business in providing 'experiences' for employees is difficult to get your head around. But this is a subject that simply cannot be ignored.

The reasons large global organisations in particular have wised up to workplace experience can be attributed to several factors:

**Talent attraction:** As more companies in different sectors (whether in banking, law or media) transform themselves into digital companies, they are increasingly competing in the same digital talent pool to attract and retain the best people. They are putting themselves in the shop window for the millennials, who will make up three-quarters of the workforce by 2030 according to Forbes magazine. Experiences that play to the talent agenda include free food, curated events and 'cool' office interiors.

**Innovation:** There is growing recognition that the familiar day-to-day experiences of even well-planned offices and campuses are not conducive to encouraging people to think differently or seek different colleagues and partners to generate new ideas. So new experiences are being designed that play to the innovation agenda, include the engineering of serendipitous encounters and the provision of project rooms, creative labs and exhibition spaces.

**Wellbeing:** Organisations trying to drive up employee performance amid tough economic conditions are increasingly interested in health and wellbeing as a lever to improve productivity. This focus on physical and mental wellbeing is bringing a halt to treating people like cogs in a machine that just requires the nuts and bolts to be tightened to go faster. Workplace experience is critical in this context. Companies are playing to the wellbeing agenda with biophilic environments, cleaner air, natural daylight, soundscapes, stress helplines, health checks, retreat spaces and yoga classes.

# 02

## WHY SUPER-EXPERIENCES?

### AMAZON GO: SEAMLESS SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

Amazon has transformed the shopping experience by blending sophisticated technology with physical space. Amazon Go allows customers to shop by picking products from the shelves and just walking out – no check-out required. Customers need the Amazon Go app to shop and purchase items. Using technologies similar to those seen in self-driving cars – computer vision, sensor fusion and deep learning – the technology detects when products are taken from or returned to the shelves and keeps track of them in a virtual cart. Amazon Go is currently located in San Francisco, Chicago and Seattle in the USA. The project holds important lessons in providing a seamless experience in, for example, office security or accessing workplace services such as catering.



### EMPLOYEE DESIGN EXPERIENCE | Airbnb HQ | SAN FRANCISCO

**Automation and AI:** As the fourth industrial revolution takes shape in the workplace, new technology will increasingly automate many routine tasks, leaving people to concentrate on more imaginative, empathic and creative types of work. This work will be more social and collaborative, requiring new experiences – from vibrant restaurants and cafes to exhibition spaces – that make the office a ‘destination’ worth visiting for employees who can otherwise access their data from the Cloud and work from anywhere.

**Learning:** Many companies are styling themselves as learning organisations, with a focus on lifelong learning and self-learning in the workplace. In an unstable era of rapid economic and technological change, workforces constantly need to update their knowledge both online and in group learning settings. Experiences that play to the learning agenda include seamless connectivity, immersive learning suites and social learning events.

**Mobility:** As the use of Cloud, 5G and smartphone technology give rise to greater worker mobility across time and place, this ability to work anywhere anytime puts greater onus on the workplace experience to draw people in. Experiences that address mobile and remote workers include programmed events and curated interactions.

Among these drivers, the ‘war for talent’ is becoming a dominant consideration. If employees can now choose from a wider range of organisations in a global economy where every company is now a digital company, then social and environmental values become a defining factor. What type of ethos and experience is on offer, more than salary or other perks, will be the make-or-break in choosing to take a job or stay in one. Experience design can also be useful in helping to define and underscore corporate purpose and values, thus creating a sense of belonging. Airbnb, for example, has a mission to ‘feel like you’re home anywhere’ and encapsulates this idea in its workplace design.

### AIRBNB, SAN FRANCISCO: HOME FROM HOME

Airbnb took an architectural approach to employee experience when developing its San Francisco headquarters at 999 Brennan Street. Its environments team wanted to build spaces which invite exploration and curiosity, so it engaged with employees in an Employee Design Experience (EDX) program to incorporate design components from existing Airbnb listings into meeting rooms, while also illustrating elements of San Francisco local identity. This experience transports employees into a different place and mindset within the context of a ‘homely’ environment, so they feel comfortable to share ideas.



# 02

## WHY SUPER-EXPERIENCES?



Collectively, these drivers mean that many different and new experiences are fast emerging in the workplace. Just as online shopping has disrupted the physical retail experience, digital disruption in the workplace is having the same effect on office design. Indeed, many of the customer-centric techniques of retail and hospitality – with an emphasis on responding swiftly to real-time data – are transferring to the workplace. Companies which once focused only on experience and service for their customers in the market are now rethinking what they give to their employees in the workplace.

**SUPER-EXPERIENCES IN THE WORKPLACE ARE THE NEXT WAVE OF THE EXPERIENCE-DRIVEN ECONOMY.**

### FROM EXPERIENCES TO SUPER-EXPERIENCES

With an emphasis on experience now a key part of the workplace, the ante is continuously being upped as companies compete globally for talent. UX (User Experience) is becoming SX (Super Experience). Food and hospitality services, for example, are elevated by studying the links between nutrition and neuroscience to improve cognition and performance. Office design features are no longer just 'cool' but jaw-dropping in their visual impact, as the scientific benefits of creating awe among employees becomes better understood.

The engineering of serendipitous encounters for innovation is sped up through a combination of spatial design, digital apps and measurement coefficients. Entire biophilic environments push the limits of green design, creating Amazonian interiors to boost wellbeing. Knowledge-driven organisations are exploring mass

social learning events and interventions by artists. Experiences are being extended from the single workspace to the wider smart precinct, neighbourhood or campus.

In all of these developments, physical and digital layers of experience are intermixed and journey mapping sits at the heart of experience strategy. Indeed, new technology is a central factor: many experiences are now driven by 'the office in your pocket' as smartphones interact with smart building infrastructure to transform routine experiences such as wayfinding, room bookings or organising hospitality into something much more seamless and satisfying.

Super-experiences in the workplace are the next wave of the experience-driven economy. In the following sections, we define what they are and their effects, and explore the different organisational and built environmental contexts in which super-experiences are developing.

### WORKWELL: BRINGING THE MIRVAC COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Mirvac is working with workplace app developer Workwell to develop a digital platform aimed towards enhancing the building user experience. Mirvac has over 65,000 people working in its buildings from corporates to SMEs and entrepreneurs, currently may only know just 5 percent of this community. This platform will engage the entire community in one, centralised virtual space to communicate, share feedback and collaborate. The platform will allow access to a suite of services from both the tenant and landlord, including security access, booking meeting rooms, joining clubs and activities, and communicating with the entire group. Eventually these capabilities will expand to buying and selling services and products. The roll-out will be across Mirvac's entire portfolio, so creating a platform from which Mirvac can launch new experiences to the whole community.

367 COLLINS STREET | MELBOURNE



# 03

## ANATOMY OF A SUPER-EXPERIENCE

Super-experiences bring the working day to life. They can be defined as workplace experiences that are of superior quality, originality and impact, appealing on an emotional level as well as an intellectual one.

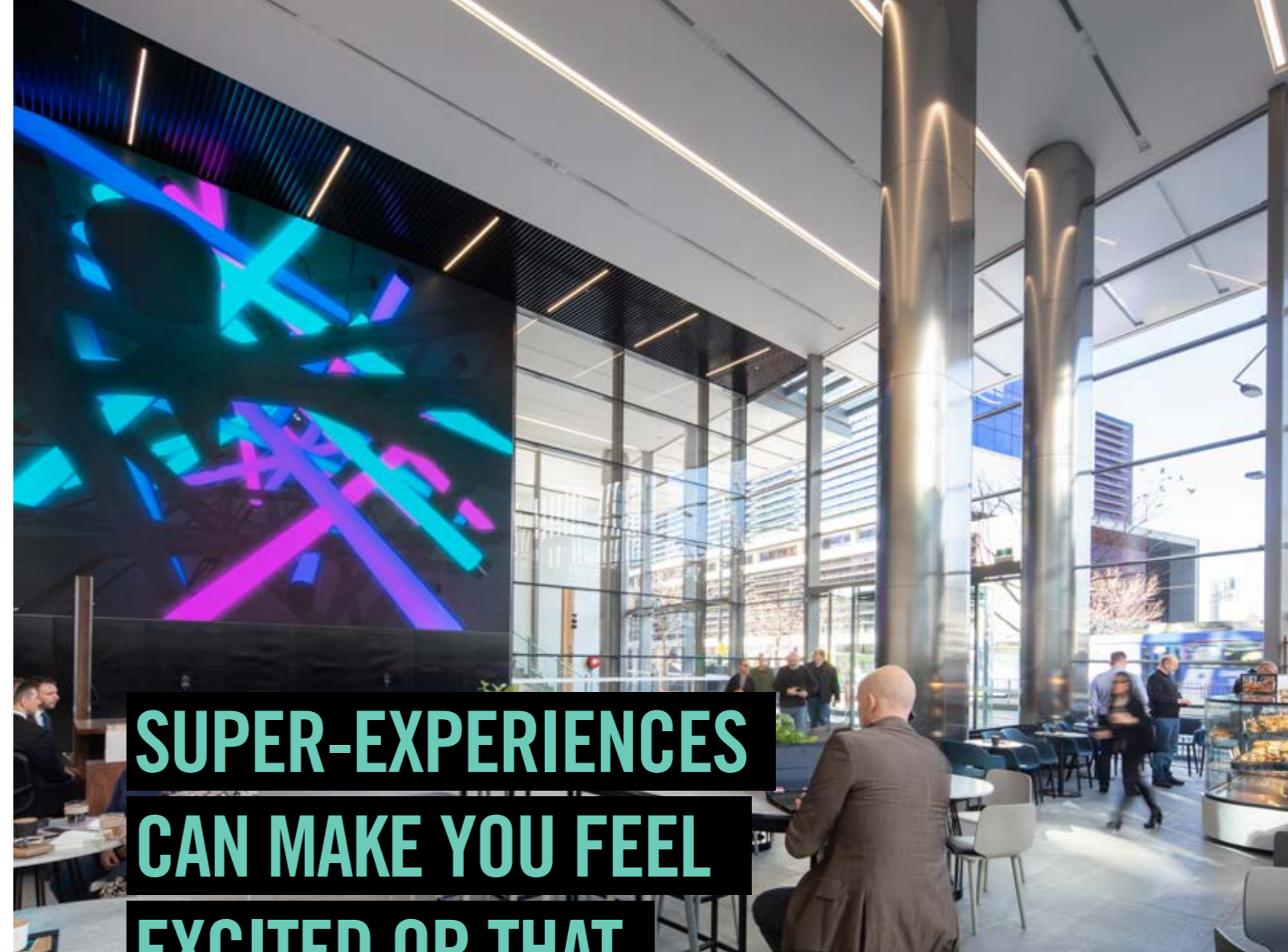
Often, they combine physical and digital elements. Super-experiences can make you feel excited or that you've achieved something; they can stimulate curiosity, create a sense of purpose or instil a sense of belonging. They can be incongruous and unexpected – or reassuring and just what you need right now. They can be small and intimate or executed on a grand scale.

Historically, the workplace experience (see fig 1) was all about combining clarity with optimisation. The principle was to make processes and facilities easy and clear to understand and use, while optimising resources. This has served organisational efficiency well. However, workplace strategists and experience designers now recognise that experiences should sit along

a spectrum. Experiences should have levels of intrigue, delight and curiosity – not just clarity, which can be dull and routine. Experiences should be human-centric and empathic – and not just all about optimising resources.

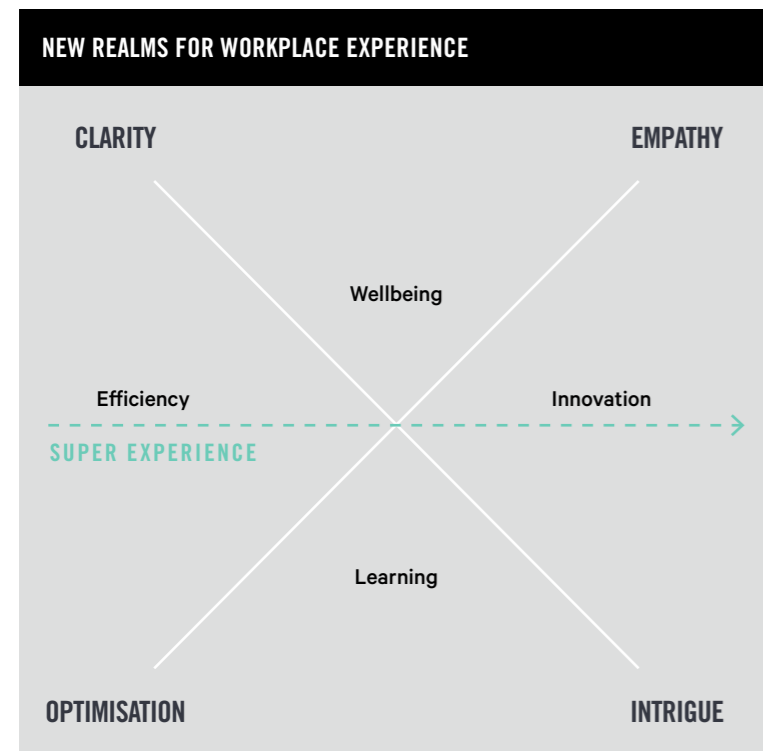
Super-experiences are therefore emerging as experiences shift from clarity and optimisation towards intrigue and empathy. Experiences that combine greater empathy with some element of intrigue or curiosity can be seen in particular to support organisational innovation, as individual creativity and imagination is unleashed in partnership with trust and empowerment. Super-experiences can support other corporate agendas. A combination of clarity and empathy, for example, can be seen to create a strong foundation for wellbeing, as empathetic spaces and services for better health are given clear visual priority in the workplace. A combination of optimisation and intrigue can lead to new learning experiences that exploit new technologies such as digital gaming while stimulating human curiosity and appetite for knowledge

The clarity-optimisation axis of experience does remain relevant in the workplace – the provision of seamless and frictionless connectivity (as evidenced by genius bars and concierge services) is a good example of this combination being highly desirable right across the workforce. However, what matters is that workplace experience extends into new realms capable of taking people out of one state and into another, revealing some essence of their purpose at work. It is in these new areas where super-experiences are beginning to emerge.



**SUPER-EXPERIENCES CAN MAKE YOU FEEL EXCITED OR THAT YOU'VE ACHIEVED SOMETHING; THEY CAN STIMULATE CURIOSITY, CREATE A SENSE OF PURPOSE OR INSTIL A SENSE OF BELONGING.**

Fig 1: Super-experiences stretch into new domains (source: WORKTECH Academy)



### BURNING MAN FESTIVAL, NEVADA, USA: RADICAL INCLUSION

Burning Man is an arts festival based in the Black Rock Desert in northwest Nevada. It is a unique experience in which the creators of the event erect a temporary city in the desert, and the more than 65,000 participants must follow 10 fundamental principles. These principles include 'radical inclusion', 'decommodification' and 'leaving no trace'. Attendees are encouraged to create their own individual, organic experience where 'anything goes'.

# 03

## ANATOMY OF A SUPER-EXPERIENCE

In an echo of Burning Man, Adam Scott, global creative director of experience designers Freestate, part of Hassell, believes that 'the first great super-designed experience took place 30,000 years ago in caves lit by fire and overseen by Shamans. The Shaman was a master of designed experiences – fierce, awesome and ecstatic experiences which bound people together and to something greater than themselves'. Today, says Scott, we are still striving to create the 'unforgettable moment' which invites the spectator into the spectacle. He cut his teeth as a young architect in London designing club nights and other events – 'where the audience votes with its feet' – before consulting on Virgin Atlantic Upper Class. Designing experience has always been part of a 'mutant practice' which he says combines architecture, technology and change management. He explains: 'Our vision is to keep everyone aligned and involved. Any super-experience must be about enthusiasm and generosity.'

Architect Ali Ganjavian of Studio Banana, whose firm created the Momentum Experience Centre in EY's London headquarters, says that super-experiences in the workplace are those that allow people to try something new for the first time and shift their behaviour and way of thinking as a result. There must be some element of surprise and dislocation to avoid repeat exposure dulling the impact. Ganjavian cites his work on 'The Circle', a public art project held in a traditional square in the centre of Madrid for four days, which created a perfect circle of natural grass measuring 70 metres in diameter. Citizens and city workers interacted with this temporary intervention in unexpected ways, changing their familiar patterns and enjoying moments of peace, reflection and community in the heart of a bustling city.



Photo Credit Richard Johnson

### WEWORK SUMMER CAMP

Every year global co-working giant WeWork hosts a weekend-long summer camp for both its employees and members who rent its co-working space. It is designed to evoke camp-like memories which bond people together in a range of activities from group sporting events to wellness classes, live music and inspiring talks and debates. The aim is to create new relationships with co-workers using an experience which typically evokes great memories and nostalgia.

### EXPERIENCE AS SOCIAL CRITIQUE

French experience designer and creative director Dr Nelly Ben Hayoun, who has worked with such organisations as NASA and the United Nations on experience-centred collaborations, believes super-experiences should take people out of their comfort zone and subvert social structures or hierarchies. But she is against rigid definitions or demarcations as to how this transformation might be achieved or what elements should be in play.

Ben Hayoun's own work is a mix of critical design, political theory and theatrical practices. She uses powerful theatrical, experiential and design production techniques to create a platform for debate and critique on a particular social or political issue. She cites Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty, in which gesture, image, sound and lighting shock audiences out of a passive state, as a key artistic influence. This plays out in

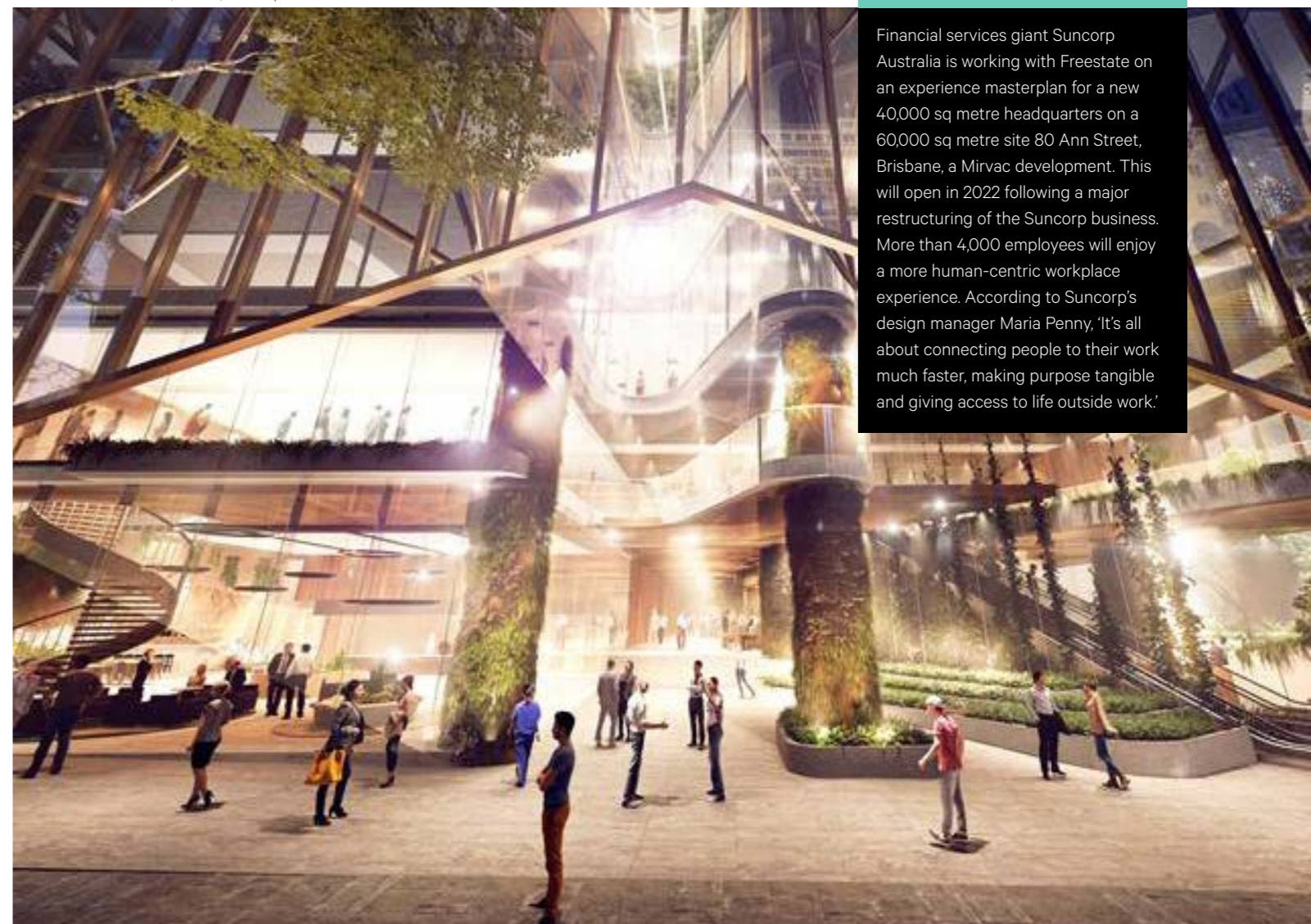
different ways in different organisational contexts. With NASA, for example, Ben Hayoun assembled the first orchestra of space scientists: 'This was a project about critical thinking, to get people who had been scientists all their life to reflect on space exploration – not on a mathematical level but on a philosophical one.'

# SUPER-EXPERIENCES SHOULD TAKE PEOPLE OUT OF THEIR COMFORT ZONE AND SUBVERT SOCIAL STRUCTURES OR HIERARCHIES.

DR NELLY BEN HAYOUN | *BHN Studios*

### SUNCORP: AN EXPERIENCE MASTERPLAN FOR MIRVAC'S PROJECT

80 Ann, Brisbane, Artists impression.



Financial services giant Suncorp Australia is working with Freestate on an experience masterplan for a new 40,000 sq metre headquarters on a 60,000 sq metre site 80 Ann Street, Brisbane, a Mirvac development. This will open in 2022 following a major restructuring of the Suncorp business. More than 4,000 employees will enjoy a more human-centric workplace experience. According to Suncorp's design manager Maria Penny, 'It's all about connecting people to their work much faster, making purpose tangible and giving access to life outside work.'



# 04

## AWE-INSPIRING EXPERIENCES

An important dimension of the super-experience is the ability to create a sense of awe. We're accustomed to using the adjective 'awesome' to describe cathedrals, museums, opera houses or upscale homes, but rarely employ it when discussing workplaces. That could be set to change as more organisations understand the benefits that a sense of awe can bring to the workplace.

Griskevicius, Shiota and Neufeld (2010) define a sense of awe as 'the feeling of wonder and astonishment experienced in the presence of something novel and difficult to grasp—a stimulus that cannot be accounted for by ones current understanding of the world'. According to different academic studies, employees think more creatively, are more curious and process information more efficiently when they are confronted by objects or spaces that inspire a sense of awe. People also have a more open mind, are less impatient,

feel more connected to the world around them, integrate more effectively into social groups, have a more balanced view of their strengths and weaknesses, and experience greater momentary wellbeing.

This growing body of scientific evidence, which underscores the idea that a sense of awe in the workplace can boost employee performance, is significant in the context of the rise of the super experience because it introduces an economic rationale for design features that are not just out of the ordinary

but sometimes out of this world. Design proposals for a genuinely jaw-dropping feature or setting have often been dismissed as self-indulgent, which is why some of the most spectacular elements of new workplace schemes tend to be engineered out of the process at an early stage on the grounds of cost.

### SALESFORCE, SAN FRANCISCO: OHANA CONCEPT

Salesforce has installed a large digital wall in its lobby that can display the Californian Redwood National Forest in high resolution and mimic a convincing waterfall. The creation is empathetic to the mood and energy of the office. The company has also adopted the Hawaiian concept of Ohana, meaning family in Hawaiian, into the workplace design. Mindfulness areas have been placed on each floor for recharging and there is an emphasis on natural materials and residential-inspired finishes.

Photo Credit: Salesforce



### ONE WORLD TRADE CENTRE, NEW YORK: ELEVATOR PITCH

The elevator in One World Trade Centre in New York climbs 102 stories in 47 seconds. Throughout the ascend an immersive digital display reveals the transformation of New York City from unsettled plains to the current forest of skyscrapers. This experience moves the individual into another state of mind, including them in New York's transformative journey and creating a sense of awe.



### SPECTACULAR INNOVATIONS

But now the mood is changing. In the experience economy, the old real-estate metrics around space and infrastructure no longer apply. Rapid advances in immersive AV technology and human-centric tech are supporting growing corporate occupier demand for super-experiences at work. Already we are seeing some spectacular innovations; for example, the awesome elevator experience at One World Trade Center in New York, in which you witness the urban growth and development of New York from the 1500s to today as you ride up the building, is memorable and astonishing. The trouble with being awe-struck is that there could be diminishing returns in the

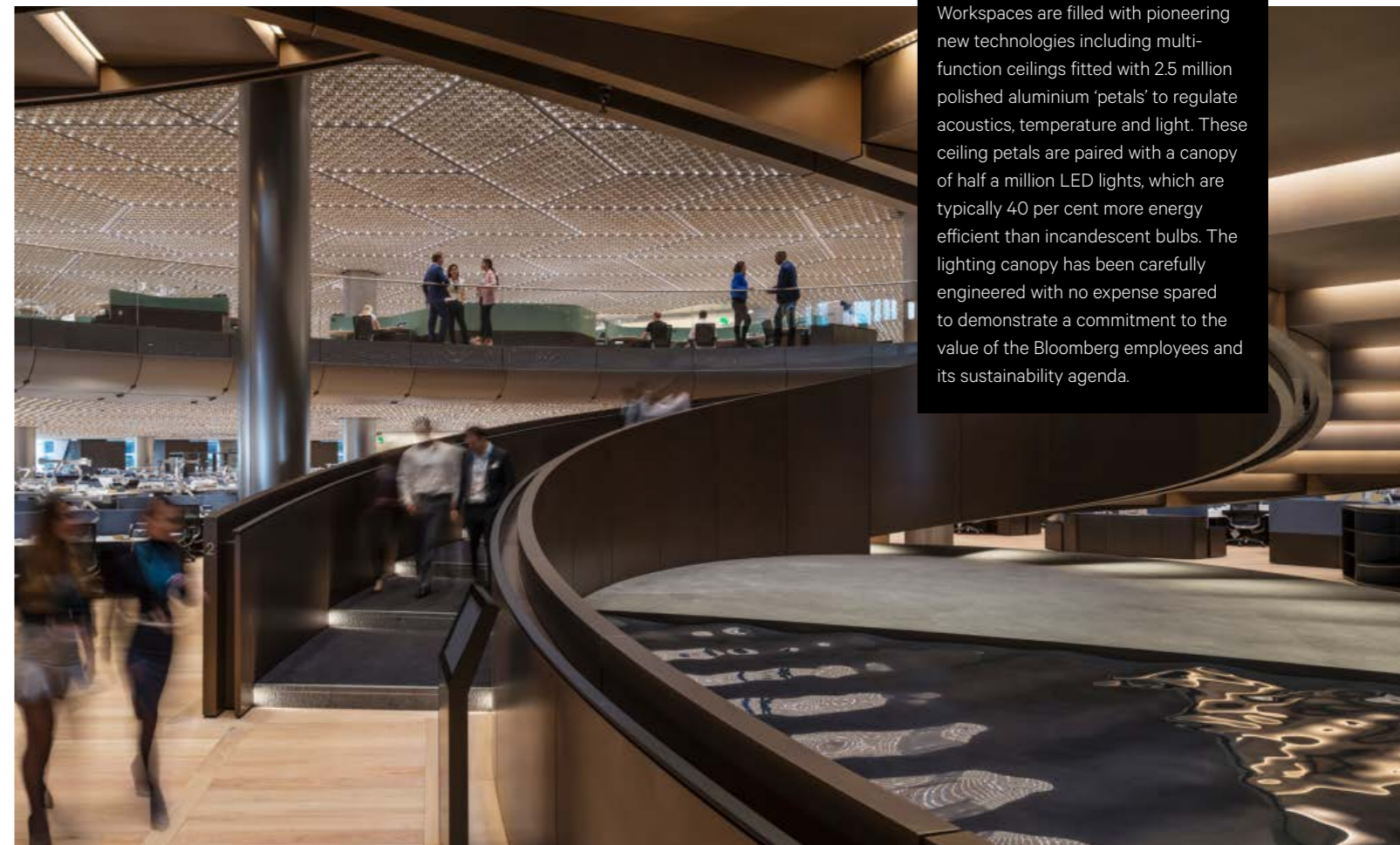
workplace as employees repeat the same experiences day after day. The first time you view something that takes your breath away is when you really experience that sense of awe. It doesn't happen often but you know the feeling when you get it. The next time, it becomes marginally less astonishing. The fiftieth time could become the new normal. However, creating a sense of awe doesn't depend on scale; according to academic research, even the smallest things – an intricately crafted jewellery box, for example – can produce the same sensation. Nor does it depend on quickening the emotions. Giving employees an oasis in which to slow down, pause and reflect during the working day can also be awe-inspiring.

What is important is that that organisations should conduct user research among employees to determine if a potential effect is likely to inspire awe among the people who will be present in a space. Super-experiences which aim to encourage people to behave in entirely new ways by shaking up their psychology are often a result of co-design or consultation processes with those employees.

### BLOOMBERG, LONDON: LOOKING UP

The lighting in Bloomberg's new headquarters in London, designed by Foster + Partners, is a clear example of awe-inspiring design. Workspaces are filled with pioneering new technologies including multi-function ceilings fitted with 2.5 million polished aluminium 'petals' to regulate acoustics, temperature and light. These ceiling petals are paired with a canopy of half a million LED lights, which are typically 40 per cent more energy efficient than incandescent bulbs. The lighting canopy has been carefully engineered with no expense spared to demonstrate a commitment to the value of the Bloomberg employees and its sustainability agenda.

Photo Credit: James Newton



# 05

## CURATED EXPERIENCES

Experiences just used to happen in the workplace without much planning or control, almost as a by-product of everyday occurrences. Today, experiences are becoming highly curated and managed. In the age of the super-experience, for example, there is growing focus on the ‘bump factor’ – bringing people together in random and serendipitous encounters to encourage collaboration and innovation.

The origins of this approach lie in MIT’s legendary Building 20 at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Built in 1943, it spawned a whole host of post-war technological breakthroughs (from radar to microwave technology) due to a flexible design promoting spontaneous collaboration. Known as ‘the magical incubator’, Building 20 assumed almost mythological status among designers and developers who tried to emulate its approach.

Bell Labs’ research facility in Murray Hill, New Jersey, designed by Eero Saarinen in the late 1950s to house more than 6,000 engineers and researchers, was another pioneering project: its offices were spread along far-reaching corridors to ensure staff would bump into each other as they moved through the labs. The invention of solar cells and transistors resulted from these collaborations.



**THERE IS GROWING FOCUS ON THE ‘BUMP FACTOR’ – BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER IN RANDOM AND SERENDIPITOUS ENCOUNTERS TO ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION.**

### NOTHING LEFT TO CHANCE

Today, organisations don’t leave anything to chance in orchestrating chance encounters. They combine design with technology, with extensive use of data analytics and digital apps to bring people together, although architectural interventions remain important. For example, the punching of giant social staircases through several floor slabs, opening up the organisation for cross-departmental and cross-disciplinary collaboration, has become a recurring feature of various workplace schemes.

In London, for example, Macquarie Bank at Ropemaker Place and Adobe at the White Collar Factory have both made spectacular insertions into their workplace to promote casual collisions. Connective staircases also feature strongly in Boston Consulting Group’s New York office at Hudson Yards where the company has even developed a ‘collision coefficient’ to measure the number of encounters, encourage people to move around and recommend colleagues to meet within the workforce.

Second Home, founded by entrepreneur Rohan Silva, creator of London’s Tech City initiative and former senior policy adviser to the Prime Minister, twins an accent on design and curation to promote the chance encounter with biophilic design, which supports cognitive functioning and wellbeing.

Second Home’s creative workplaces are green, socially dynamic super-experiences with cultural programming that constantly exposes its members (handpicked for their diversity) to new ideas and connections. After London and Lisbon, Silva aims to open in Los Angeles in May 2019.

### THE HOSPITAL CLUB, CO-WORKING FOR TELEVISION

The Hospital Club is an exclusive members club for creatives in the TV industry. It is designed to provide the ideal environment and range of facilities to help like-minded people create, connect and collaborate. Members can share experiences through events, exhibitions, social gatherings, live performances and a number of film screenings each month. Facilities include an in-house TV Studio, meeting rooms, and an event space.

# 05

## CURATED EXPERIENCES



### CHEMISTRY OF CO-WORKING

Curated experience lies at the heart of the rise of the global co-working movement, which has grown rapidly by providing experience-driven workspaces for people who work outside traditional corporate structures. Co-working can be viewed as a critique of workplaces which place a lower priority on such issues as service, community and purpose. Consider what a start-up company gains by joining a co-working venue: a shorter, more flexible lease; a designed environment that it does not have to fit out itself; and access to people and resources (including venture capital in some cases) that will be useful to help the business grow. Many co-working members belong to a gig economy in which they have several jobs and work in a range of places and can choose the experience that

fits the task they are currently working on.

WeWork and its competitors have created a new wave in real estate because the experience of support and service within any facility is usually fast and informal with helpful, zestful community managers to ensure things go smoothly. Compare that with a grumpy janitorial approach to facilities management inside many corporate organisations. Little wonder that many corporate employees now hanker to work in co-working spaces and many corporate organisations are trying to create a co-work-style environment and vibe within their office buildings.

As co-working itself raises its game, the trend is towards specialisation. There are women-only co-working venues such as The Wing, started in New York; there are co-working spaces dedicated to single

industries such as the Hospital (TV and media) and The Ministry (music industry), both in London. The Ministry, set up by Ministry of Sound entrepreneur Lohan Presencer, even has its own scent. In the search for super-experiences, all the senses are engaged.

On one level, it is possible to see the rise of specialist co-working spaces that have targeted specific professional skills and industry sectors as signalling a return to the idea of medieval craft and merchant guilds that developed and occupied the first commercial buildings in many European cities centuries ago. Specialist co-working spaces are essentially the new guilds, a timely reminder that people were once grouped together at work according to their skill, specialism and outlook – and not according to which company employs them. Modern corporations put their employees together in high clarity-high optimisation buildings and campuses to reduce business transaction costs. That thinking is now being challenged by co-working spaces functioning like ‘experience guilds’.

### THE WING – FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

The Wing is a co-working space designed specifically for entrepreneurial women. Developed in New York, it has built an empathic community which focuses on empowering women and creating an experience where members feel completely comfortable to share ideas and have open conversations. Amenities chosen are women-centric, including childcare facilities, a lactation room, beauty rooms and showers to meeting rooms hosting inspiring speakers and events.



### THE MINISTRY - MUSIC BUSINESS VENUE

The Ministry is an exclusive co-working space in London developed by the Ministry of Sound specifically for people in the music industry. Its branding creates the experience through sophisticated media technology, a music club-like design and even its own scent.

### LEARNING FROM RETAIL

While much co-working-inspired workplace curation borrows from the hospitality sector, many ideas are also being imported from retail. The mapping of customer journeys and the suggestions of new experiences (things to do and people to meet) via digital apps transfer the customer focus of retail into the heart of the workplace. Much like IKEA stores curate a route for customers to flow throughout the store, Facebook, for example, has adopted a similar concept to curate its employees’ workplace experience. Mapping journeys throughout the building can help create a highly empathic workplace experience.

Other companies are emulating Netflix, which recommends programmes for individuals based on what they have previously watched or what others have enjoyed, by using the app-centric workplace to create ‘suggested experience’. This is where individuals are presented with a range of workspace options based on what they have previously enjoyed or what others around them are enjoying. A series of recommendations are given to you based on algorithms from machine learning software making the workplace experience less stressful.

In the era of super-experiences, algorithms will increasingly predict and prompt our every move based on past behaviour and recorded preferences. Expert curation will also give us chill-out zones to escape from digital technology – although our predilection for these will be digitally logged too.

IT IS POSSIBLE TO SEE THE RISE OF SPECIALIST CO-WORKING SPACES THAT HAVE TARGETED SPECIFIC PROFESSIONAL SKILLS.



# 06

## LEARNING EXPERIENCES

There is now growing onus on organisations to become learning organisations and for individuals working within them to become continuous learners, so that the workplace can adjust to change, absorb new knowledge and update skills. Learning is no longer a solo activity, done at the desk at set times with a teacher. It is becoming a more fluid social activity and is self-driven. The term ‘omni-learning’ has been used to describe a process in which people are encouraged and expected to constantly update their skills independently and pass on learnings to colleagues.

### SOCIAL LEARNING

Within this context, the learning experience at work is entering the super era. According to Johan Brand, co-founder of Kahoot!, a Norwegian platform for game-based learning, designing experiences for learning are different from any other type of experience. ‘Good pedagogy is completely experienced based’, explains Brand. ‘Companies are often bad at learning – they place too much responsibility on solo learners and not enough emphasis on social learning. Our goal with Kahoot! is to make learning awesome.’

Kahoot! creates learning experiences that are shared and celebratory – in the case of one event with Telenor in Oslo, more than 3,000 senior citizens were instructed in how to use the internet. Participants are encouraged to compete in a playful

way. ‘People learn better together,’ states Brand. ‘Push against challenge, yes, but it’s got to be fun. Empathy with the user is so important. It is about intrinsic motivation, owning your goals as a learner.’

As the number of digital learning apps proliferate and data companies such as Faethm use AI to match people to handling future-of-work technologies, the learning mission inside organisations is set to generate a new type of super-experience. Already some co-working companies such as Campfire and WeWork have expanded into co-learning. Learning and engagement spaces and services typically found in museums and universities, are entering the corporate office - and old-fashioned libraries are making a comeback, refashioned as an oasis for quiet and concentration.

### KAHOOT! SOCIAL LEARNING

Kahoot has developed learning platforms for corporate clients including Facebook, Apple, Microsoft and Disney, to help engage employees in social learning through digital gaming. Science proves that collective learning can stimulate better learning experience because people react to each other’s emotions and therefore become more engaged. Social learning enables learning to be playfully competitive and empathetic.

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### NASA: INTERNATIONAL SPACE ORCHESTRA

Experience designer Dr Nelly Ben Hayoun worked with NASA to develop world’s first International Space Orchestra, curating an experience which challenged space scientists to think differently and learn something new. NASA employees were invited to join the orchestra to coax them out of their usual thinking patterns through music and performance.



# 07

## ACTIVATING THE SUPER-EXPERIENCE

In a 2017 global study by Deloitte surveying the opinions of more than 11,000 business and HR leaders across 140 countries, nearly 80 per cent of executives rated employee experience either very important (42 per cent) or important (38 per cent), but only 22 per cent reported that their companies were excellent at building a differentiated employee experience. This clearly shows that there is a lot of ground to make up in reaching the state of workplace super-experience discussed in this report.

Mirvac is committed to making user experience a central part of its development strategy and is creating the blueprint for integrating experience design into all of its projects. Super-experiences won't happen by themselves in the workplace – they need activating – and Mirvac is working on principles and models that will enable experiences to be generated across its office and industrial assets that are consistent and of high quality.

“What Mirvac are doing, across the portfolio is to deeply understand the customer journey throughout the working day and beyond, and design experiences that respond to the emotional, intellectual and physical needs a customer has throughout that journey, to make it seamless and enjoyable.” says Paul Edwards, GM Workplace Experience.

### MIRVAC HAS IDENTIFIED SIX PILLARS FOR WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE WHICH REFLECT WIDER GLOBAL TRENDS IN THE FIELD

- **Distinctive Design:** relevant and authentic design features that can create a sense of awe and delight
- **Memorable Moments:** curated and vibrant events that create a sense of community
- **Seamless Integration:** enabling an intuitive integration of technology
- **Insight Driven:** using data analytics to create more tailored user experiences based on need
- **Community Connection:** engaging the wider neighbourhood / precinct and encouraging chance encounters
- **Enhanced Lifestyles:** an accent on employee wellbeing and supporting lifestyle

Mirvac have recently implemented a set of guidelines, to guide the curation of the experience on the Ground Plane of their assets.

“We don't want our customers to have a uniform experience across our portfolio, but we do want them to have a consistently satisfying experience. What that looks like for each asset will differ slightly, but still feel quintessentially ‘Mirvac,’” says Mr Edwards.

### SOUTH EVELEIGH (THE FORMER- AUSTRALIAN TECHNOLOGY PARK)



Mirvac is developing South Eveleigh in Sydney to be a world-leading technology and innovation hub. The 13.2 hectare site has been transformed with an array of authentic experiences both for people who work there and for the wider community. South Eveleigh, which sits within a strong existing community, draws on the knowledge and experiences of this culture in order to educate the on-site tenants and local community. One of the ways this has been brought to life is through the creation of a rooftop permaculture indigenous farm, which will grow exclusively Australian Indigenous produce. Tenants and members of the community can volunteer, learn or simply enjoy the farm, thereby passing their knowledge on to others. There will also be regular talks and tours as well as partnering with local food retailers to utilise the produce. The new South Eveleigh experience celebrates the cultural history of the site bringing this to the forefront through a unique heritage trail both digital and physical, access to historical artefacts and stories, a blacksmith that works on-site, for anyone to observe. The blacksmith along with the community used this unique skill and to run collaborative workshops to create leaves for an inspiring art piece which will form an integral part of the precinct. With Health and wellbeing as a focus area for all future employees, South Eveleigh will offer a range of experiences from Yoga and massage, to basketball and a skate park.

**SUPER-EXPERIENCES  
WON'T HAPPEN BY THEMSELVES  
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# 07

## ACTIVATING THE SUPER-EXPERIENCE

As we contemplate a shift from UX to SX (Super-Experience), we believe it is important to open a debate about what's next in designing for experiences. We don't have all the answers and we're interested to hear your views on the topic. But our bet is that a bewildering blend of new technologies, theatrical practices and curated social encounters will transform our experience of the workplace in ways that are only now beginning to unfold.

Here are some ideas that will help organisations make the journey towards activating super-experiences:

### THERE SHOULD BE A PEOPLE-FIRST APPROACH WITH EMPATHIC AND HUMAN-CENTRIC VALUES

Too often the property industry has put physical assets before people, and hard metrics around space and infrastructure before softer issues of behaviour, perception and belonging. That needs to change.

### HR, IT AND FACILITIES NEED TO WORK MUCH CLOSER TOGETHER TO CREATE EXPERIENCES

Workplace experience sits at the intersection of people, place and technology, so why do so many organisations maintain siloed operations and keep functions apart in their buildings?

### NEW SKILLS SHOULD BE DEVELOPED IN THE PROPERTY SECTOR

The rise of experience in offices has caught the property industry off guard. Expertise and ideas from theatre, arts, hospitality, retail and behavioural science are needed in the sector.

### KEEP AN OPEN MIND ON TECHNOLOGY

The era of the super-experience will introduce new lighting, AV, soundscaping and sensor technologies to the workplace along with a blitz of digital apps. This might feel unfamiliar but, amid a war for talent, this should be embraced.

### FLEXIBILITY IS THE KEY TO OFFERING A PORTFOLIO OF EXPERIENCES

In a world of flexible leases, adaptable spaces and portfolio careers in the gig economy, people will not sit in the same office each day – they will choose from a range of experiences and expect experiences to change constantly.

### CURATION IS ALL ABOUT SERVICE, TRAINING – AND KNOWING THE LIMITS

Highly curated workplace experiences stand or fall on the quality of service and understanding user preferences. Training will be essential to cultivate the soft skills required. But over-curated environments can be a turn-off; community building should be organic, not forced.

A BEWILDERING BLEND OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES, THEATRICAL PRACTICES AND CURATED SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS WILL TRANSFORM OUR EXPERIENCE OF THE WORKPLACE



## ABOUT MIRVAC

### Mirvac Office & Industrial A different way of working

Since 1972, Mirvac has grown to become Australia's leading name in property – an ASX Top 50 company with a uniquely diverse, end-to-end business. In the Office & Industrial sector, we currently have over \$5 billion of assets under management, and together with our partners, continually strive to create workplaces where people can perform at their best.

[office.mirvac.com](http://office.mirvac.com)

## ABOUT WORKTECH ACADEMY

### WORKTECH Academy is a global knowledge platform for the future of work and workplace.

It brings the best insights, ideas and evidence from the WORKTECH conference series, now in more than 20 cities around the world, to a community of professionals all over the world. The Academy's content is curated in six streams: people, place, technology, culture, design and innovation. Mirvac is a Corporate Member of WORKTECH Academy.

[www.worktechacademy.com](http://www.worktechacademy.com)

