



INLAND STEEL

Workspring Building-Enabled at Chicago's Inland Steel

Be Accomplished

by Brad Powell

By nature – even by definition – the office is changing dramatically. After constructing and deconstructing so-called systems for the past 40 years or so, only to return, essentially, to the bull pen arrangement from the dawn of the office era, in a true-life Zen experience we once again see what was before us from the beginning, albeit now with understanding. Upon reflection, we must all wonder what took so long and what were the inhibiting factors, but that's another story.

We now see clearly that interior design has a much more dramatic role in creating interior envi-



WELCOME AREA

ronments than prettifying and compressing workspaces, and that the profession is now stepping up in much more imaginative ways to provide places to work that are both healthier and more productive. (See officeinsight 1.14.13, *A Random Walk: Interior Design: Some Lessons from 2012*, <http://www.officeinsight.com/1759>) Few companies have been as imaginative as **Steelcase** in exploring new ground, first, in the late 1990s, with community-based planning, and now, with its **Workspring** initiative. (I note that the community-based concept, which, to me, originated with **Jane Jacobs's** *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, is the progenitor of the mixed, layered workplace trends of today. This approach has been well adapted over the past decade or so by some contract furniture manufacturers, particular, in the earlier years, by Steelcase and **Herman Miller** at its Design Yard.)

While the Workspring concept has a few variations – such as the Workspring collaboration with Marriott, providing in-hotel arrangements, and the working prototype launched in Chicago at the beginning of 2009. (See officeinsight 2.23.09, *Steelcase: Workspring*, <http://www.officeinsight.com/848>) – Workspring now has a firm grounding as an independent workspace that augments more traditional offices, or workplaces, as we now call them.

Described as “an enhanced workspace destination,” the new Workspring is in the **Inland Steel Building** at 30 W. Monroe St., Chicago. This is the first **Workspring-enabled building** in the country. The new aspect of the “Workspring-enabled building” configuration is that the building’s corporate tenants have special

pricing and privileged access to the Workspring facility located on the fourth floor, although existing Workspring customers and neighboring businesses will also have access. In addition to spaces designated for group meetings and special events, the location will also provide areas uniquely designed for individual work

and collaborative projects. Yes, it’s a meeting space, and we all know what those can be like, but this is more 21st century, a high-performance collaboration space.

“Workspring’s parent company, Steelcase, has studied the ways in which people work for more than 100 years. We’ve taken those insights and created Workspring to address the needs of today’s worker, who is more mobile and interconnected than ever before,” said **John Malnor**, vice president of Growth Initiatives for Steelcase. “Because Chicago is in the heart of our country and attracts business leaders from all around the world, it was the perfect market to introduce this new flagship location.”

What are the benefits of a Workspring Enabled-Building, that is, in addition to the very attractive amenity of having an in-building, Class A finished (with furniture and technology) adjunct space for special business meetings? There are several:

>**This is a hosted facility**, that is, there is a new level of concierge service that far exceeds mere reception arrangements and coffee, etc., although those are included. The Workspring hosting staff will go so far as to provide instructions on how to best use the facility and incorporated technology, as well as providing other desired arrangements such as health-conscious meals during meetings, and outcome and work staging consultation. Workspring characterizes this arrangement as “highly hosted,” with a fairly high ratio of staff to people, close to a ten to one. And, while a dedicated host might attend to a couple of meeting rooms, they will always be available through electronic links. Want to practice a sales pitch? Your Workspring host may be available for a sounding board and to provide some helpful observations.

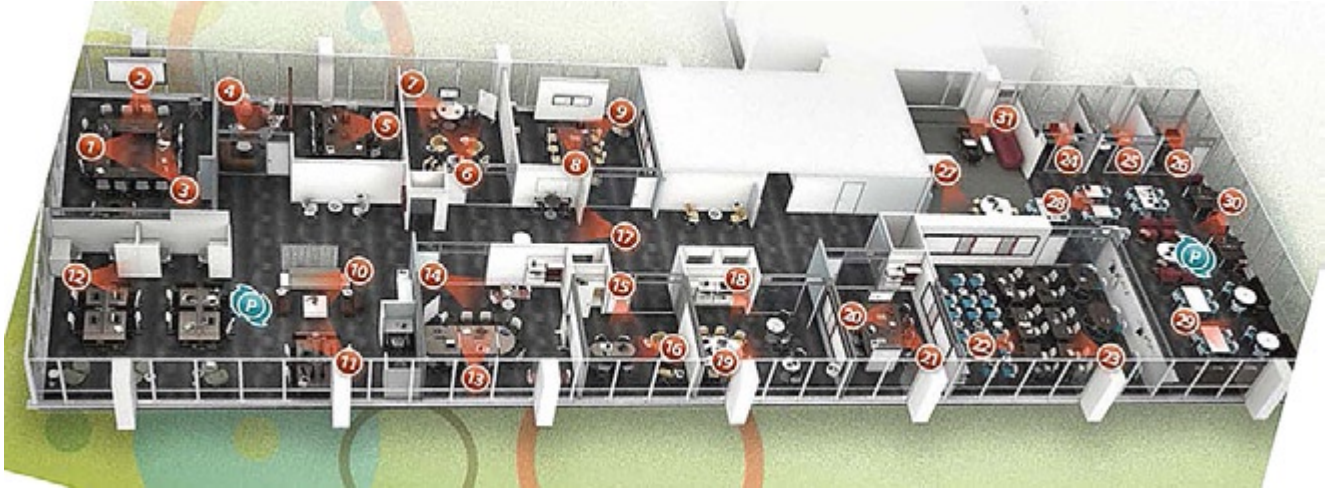


EAST EXCHANGE



STUDIO 1

companies



WORKSPRING, 30 W. MONROE ST., CHICAGO, IL;

(go to <http://www.kisp.com.ar/external/steelcase/steelcase-manufacture/113361-monroe/Presentation.htm> for fly-through)

The Steelcase folks, always ready to coin a phrase, has one for this service; it's **work hospitality**. "It's not just about your grandmother's afternoon tea, but then maybe grandma had a point. Workspring engaged a nutritionist to help understand workers' daily biorhythms in order to have available nutritious food at the right times. Hey, why not? If nutritional advice is good enough for our major league athletes, why not for the common worker.

The hosts are also poised to help in suggesting collaboration skills and techniques. We all cheer-on the benefits of collaborative work – some times without thinking much about

what that is, let alone how to effectively do it. But it's a skill, not a given, and the Workspring folks stand ready to share their knowledge.

>**The all-inclusive pricing model** for individual or group guests includes the meeting space, technology, wireless access, catering and tailored meeting supplies. This holistic service-centric approach with a dedicated host, means that the meeting planner and attendees can focus on the work at hand, not the surrounding details and arrangements

>**Steelcase keeps the space equipped** with its latest office furnishings and technology

>**The space represents state-of-the-art applied knowledge in the design and construction**, bringing together integrated service, work consultancy, technology and contemporary design, with access to natural light and ergonomic workstations. The Inland Building is one of the first steel and glass skyscrapers in Chicago that had integrated air conditioning, and all of the ten-thousand sq.-ft. space has floor to ceiling windows around the floor with no columns or load bearing walls. "One of Workspring's core foundations," said Mr. Malnor, is to locate in places where people want to be, including local activity and amenities



LUNCH IS SERVED



STUDIO 2

companies

such as restaurants, public transportation and attractive area settings.

The conceptual design for the space was done by **Mark Griener**, Steelcase, Senior Vice President, Business Concept Design + Chief Experience Officer and **Frank Graziano**, Principal Research, Steelcase WorkSpace Futures Team, who created a highly detail design brief based on their philosophical foundation elements, the incorporated technology, room size and configuration. The final architectural and interior design work was done by **Tom Condon** and **Rick van Gelderin**, InterActive Studio, Grand Rapids. I want to particularly note the collaboration of students of workplace design and development with architects and designers. Workplaces are sufficiently complex that one can contemplate the value of the views on workplace design by those who study such things, but who are themselves not architects or interior designers and would not have the skill set to realize the objectives set.

>Workspring's holistic approach is purpose-built for individual work, collaborative meetings, longer-term projects. In addition, full-service events, during or after normal work hours are accommodated. Project rooms are another example of how the office – and workstyles – are changing. Workspring can provide the kind of secure, dedicated team/project

space needed for extended period, even months, without monopolizing limited collaborative areas in leased offices. By its nature, the Workspring option provides the expansion/contraction capabilities desirable in variable economic times, to say nothing of the great benefit of having Workspring take care of the design, construction and furnishing details.

>Workspring's design enables small groups to deliver on clearly defined objectives and mission-critical expectations, as well as serving the needs of individual workers.

The Workspring hours are a somewhat traditional 7:30 am to 7:00 pm, Monday through Friday, but arrangements and card keys are available for other hours, such as after-hour events, or deadline project crushes.

The Workspring experience has provided some valuable insight about what people like about the space. According to **Danielle Galmore**, Director of Business Development, Steelcase Growth Initiatives, Workspring has a very high loyalty rate, which she attributes to the attractive effect of the environment. In one sense, it's the general ambience, a more refined "Starbucks" experience, as it were, but the staff facilitation also seems to be a very important element. And, while Workspring is highly appropriate for off-site group activities, it also is attracting those who need a different

environment in order to create the focus needed to move forward on a project.

There are obvious benefits to employers/workers in addition to space access. These include things that many of us take for granted such as exposure to the latest in contract furniture and exposure to a workspace representing some of the latest in workplace design. This initiative is intended to be its own revenue/cost center, but there is obvious throw-off benefits to the Steelcase brand, furnishing and technology.

We have seen how the office is evolving, but it remains far more common to find a more traditional arrangement in which employees have designated work stations with accompanying conference rooms or project areas. Even in the more traditional settings, however, not all businesses can afford to set aside large spaces that sit idle except for occasional special use. By managing a company from or near a Workspring-enabled building, businesses can more effectively manage their real estate expense, while having available nearby, top notch facilities as needed. According to Workspring, "this model takes a cue from other "collaborative consumption" behavior, such as a shared fitness center in an apartment building where tenants can utilize the on-site facilities and avoid the need to store a treadmill in their home."



OASIS



OASIS

The drift toward this type of community living, so to speak, was mentioned by **Katrina Kostic Samen**, in her presentation as part of the Teknion NeoCon 2012 panel:

One thing we are currently studying [in London] is shared amenities; we need to look at the entire place, not just the work areas. With various clients, banks, lawyers and corporations, we ask whether they will share amenities and other facilities with other people in a building, a reception, a meeting suite, etc. Oh shock and horror, no. But what about a post room, an archive facility or some

amenity spaces such as staff cafés or training centers, or if you had some facilities on an on-call basis, rather than everybody have their own? We're exploring that with the developers as we go through buildings.

In London there's a huge tie now between the occupier and the developer, and the occupier has a greater voice. All professionals should be advocating for the occupier when negotiating a deal for them. Say what you think; get what you want. (See officeinsight 11.12.12, Teknion NeoCon Panel 2012 — Part IV <http://www.officeinsight.com/1734>)



ENCLAVE



LIBRARY

companies

As time goes on, said Workspring, its locations will increase through strategic partnerships with brands such as Marriott Hotels & Resorts, while it provides a network of workspace destinations to meet the needs of mobile workers.

The Workspring projects gives us much to think about as it breaks down some traditional walls surrounding the notion of workplace and what it can do. We used to say, "It's not just the furniture." Now we also have to say that it's not just the space." Sharing amenities, shared ancillary space, exposure to design and furnishings and working technology and techniques, it's all there to ponder. Who knows where Workspring will go? There are many threads to pull and avenues to explore. It's a very nice experiment and we appreciate the great thought and effort that has gone into this initiative.

An official grand opening event will take place on February 7 from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. CT. This is open to the public. To learn more about Workspring, please visit www.workspring.com. ■

Websites

<http://www.workspring.com>
officeinsight 1.14.13, *A Random Walk: Interior Design: Some Lessons from 2012*, <http://www.officeinsight.com/1759>

See officeinsight 2.23.09, *Steelcase: Workspring*, <http://www.officeinsight.com/848>

officeinsight 11.12.12, *Teknion NeoCon Panel 2012 — Part IV* <http://www.officeinsight.com/1734>

©2013 officesite, inc.
publisher of officeinsight
24 East Avenue (#1299)
New Canaan, CT 06840
203.966.5008
brad@officeinsight.com
www.officeinsight.com