



Open working neighborhoods



Highly visual connection, longer views



Central filing system used for efficiency

**The lack of privacy is priceless to supervisors and team leaders as openness facilitates interaction, involvement and the awareness of certain issues.**

- Interview with Pilot Project User

### **Workplace Lab explores work patterns and informs new design**

The Public Buildings Service (PBS) in Philadelphia created a 12,000 sf **Workplace Laboratory** used by a series of departments prior to the design of their new space. By treating themselves as customers, participants spent three months in the space working in new ways that explored interaction, privacy and technology.

The Laboratory provided insight into both new work practices and the effectiveness of different design solutions. With varying degrees of experimentation and enthusiasm, some parts of the organization implemented new office protocols such as an open door policy, to improve productivity and encourage a more transparent and communicative culture. The experimental space became a communicator and a catalyst for organizational change.

New cross-disciplinary, geographically-based, service teams found that they were able to work together in a better way in the new kinds of space. Engineers and managers working on complex building problems were able to identify better operational and fiscal solutions. The laboratory also revealed that having both reserved and “non-reserved” meeting spaces was beneficial.

The new space in Philadelphia is more open and less hierarchical than the previous location. The research for the project and the experience of the Laboratory resulted in the design of six kinds of spatial solutions that recognize the differences in work styles, organizational culture and leadership, customer base and business models within even a single GSA agency. The groups vary in the degree to which they like the new space and find it effective.

PBS also introduced centralized filing. This demonstrably changed how people work and reportedly increased both the efficiency and the effectiveness of work. It reduced the cost of maintaining files and increased the quality of information capture and retrieval. The center was named the “DNA space” and linked to a library and informal meeting areas to provide a knowledge management system for the groups.

The provision of meeting rooms was also increased throughout the space to enable greater levels of collaboration and teamwork in support of the cross-disciplinary team approach.

A Space Syntax study found that the new layout has fewer and longer axial lines than the old workspace, increasing the occurrence of informal collaboration.



Discovery / Analysis Methods & Measures	Environmental Issues Themes & Solutions	Organizational Issues & Solutions
<p><b>Interviews and Focus Groups</b> In the Workplace Lab many user groups were involved in briefing activities, experimenting with new team organization, work process and environmental design. User feedback methods were instrumental in determining different solutions for the new workplace.</p>	<p><b>Spaces for interaction</b> A wider variety and greater number of conference spaces were created in the new building. A mixture of 'reservable' and 'non-reservable' meeting rooms was found to be most helpful.</p>	<p><b>Cross Functional Learning</b> Movement from "stove piped" structure to teams of "bubbles" (client facing teams) and "blocks" (large scale portfolio teams) supported project integration and encouraged face to face interaction</p>
<p><b>Behavioral Observations</b> An observational study of workplace occupancy was completed in the new workplace simultaneously with Space Syntax studies (July 2004).</p>	<p><b>Centralized Support Services and Spaces</b> The new DNA space (library/storage/meetings) reduced data management costs, improved access, increased movement and cooperation among teams and departments.</p>	<p><b>Customer Responsiveness</b> Staff reported in interviews that cross disciplinary service delivery improved the quality and timing of project solutions. Increased openness and a variety of meeting spaces increased communications.</p>
<p><b>Surveys of users</b> Pre and post occupancy surveys and interviews were conducted. Findings indicate that the previous space was well-liked and that innovations in the new space were hard to get used to.</p> <p><b>Space Syntax Study</b> Pre and post move studies revealed advantages of longer and fewer axial lines integrated into major circulation. Leadership placement at intersections increased access to expertise.</p>		<p><b>Research Roles</b></p> <p><b>C. Zimring, Georgia Tech University</b> Research contact <b>DEGW</b> Behavioral Observations <b>Georgia Tech University</b> Visioning Session, Interviews, Focus Groups, Space Syntax, POE Report <b>Jean Wineman, University of Michigan</b> Workplace Performance Survey</p>