



smart  
working<sup>®</sup>  
insight

The  
societal changes  
reshaping  
the  
Hybrid workplace  
and why.....

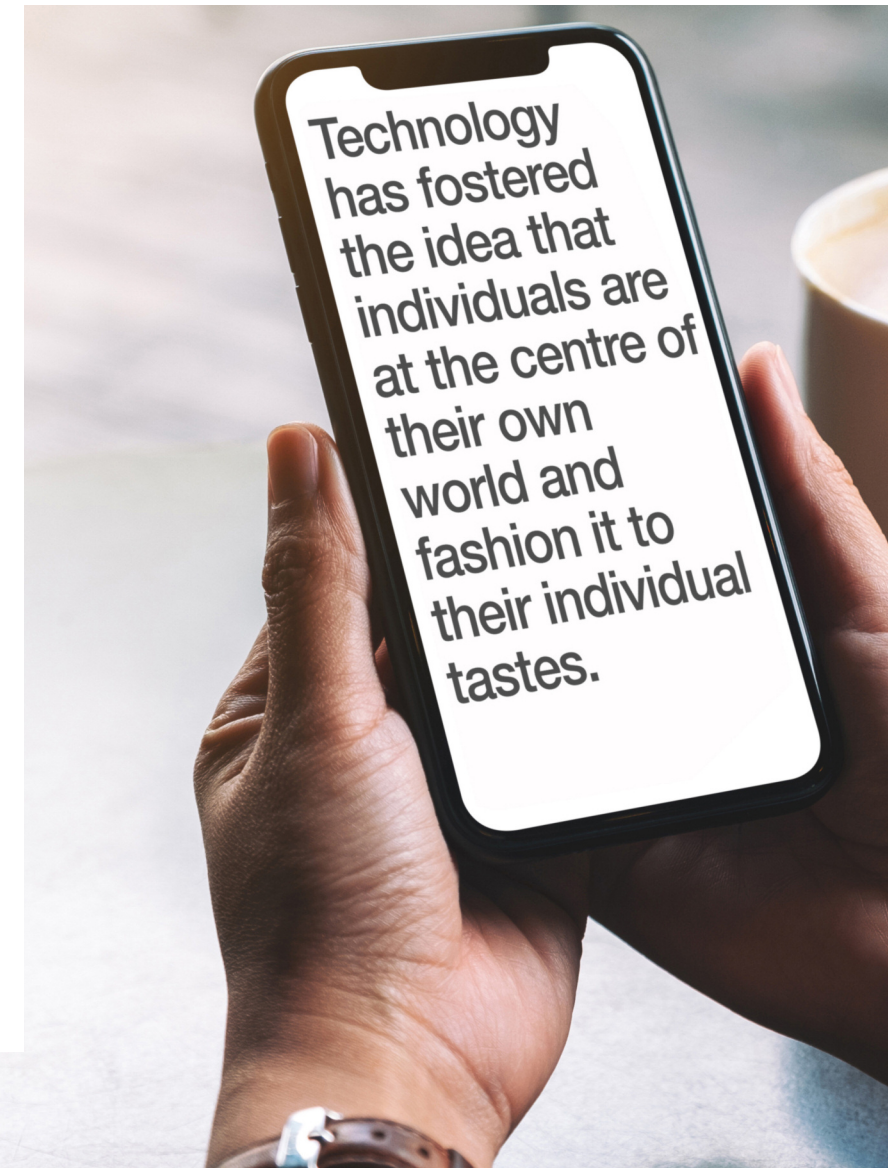
beyond  
the  
desk<sup>®</sup>

.....is designed  
to help solve them.

orangebox

This document should be read together with our latest research, *Generation Playlist*, which discusses the societal changes that will profoundly impact the new Hybrid workplace and how **the upcoming generations entering organisations have a different world view** from both their parents and those who preceded them.

Balancing this with the repercussions of our experience of Covid and how our world view has profoundly changed (and not returning to our pre Covid mindsets) has created **a challenging workplace where very different values and requirements reside**, which will need new solutions.



At Orangebox we believe that *Beyond the Desk* together with our *Campers & Den's* programme of flexible and adaptable meeting rooms offers our clients the best chance to solve these new needs of the Hybrid workplace.





People are  
**MUCH MORE ANXIOUS**  
 than they used to be.

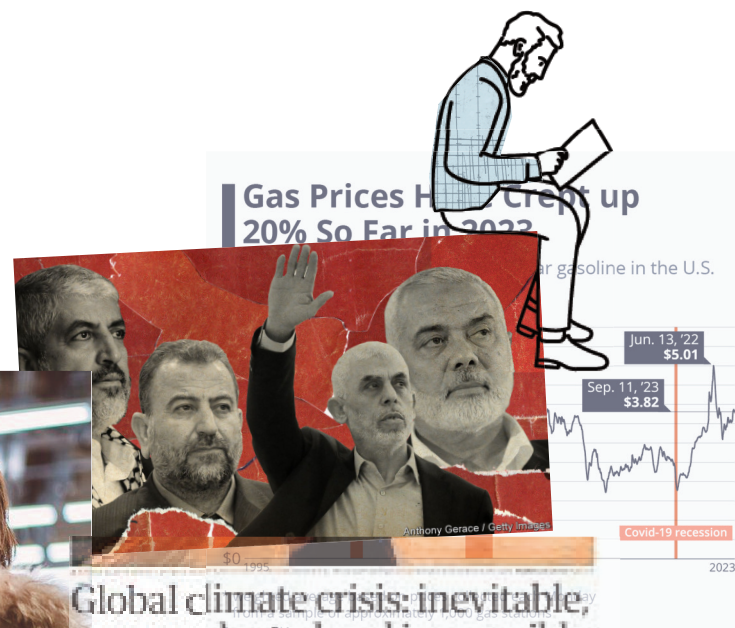
**COST OF LIVING**



**U.K. REELS FROM  
 NEW COVID VARIANT**



**Gas Prices Have Crept up  
 20% So Far in 2022**



**Global climate crisis: inevitable,  
 unprecedented and irreversible**



Covid was pretty bad and before that Climate Change was beginning to emerge, all be it (a bit over there, rather than over here) which is no longer the case, both in the UK, Europe and beyond. Covid hit us hard and in a very different and new way. We started with the expectation that it would stay somewhere like Asia and not really hit our shores in the way that it did. **With so many people dying globally and suffering from long Covid, it has been a real game changer...**

The notion that we are in control of life and that we are able to control it as we want, has been vastly diminished for people and this has now been further reinforced by the war in Ukraine and in Israel. As humans we are hard wired to watch for danger (our brain scans for threat five times a second), this evolved to allow us to survive through more hostile times but remains part of how our brains are wired today and explains why we are now on high alert. **This is now playing out in the background of people's day to day life.**

One aspect of the current crises we face is that these are global events largely beyond our control (we can't single handily stop a pandemic, end a war, or save the planet). This flies in the face of our strong need for agency and leaves us feeling helpless and even depressed. Organisations that themselves are seeking to make some sort of contribution to help change events (net zero, helping Ukraine, taking good

precautions against Covid, etc) helps mediate this and can create a sense of pride for everyone working within that organisation. Which is demonstrating that it gets what is important and wants to do something to improve the quality of life, for everyone.

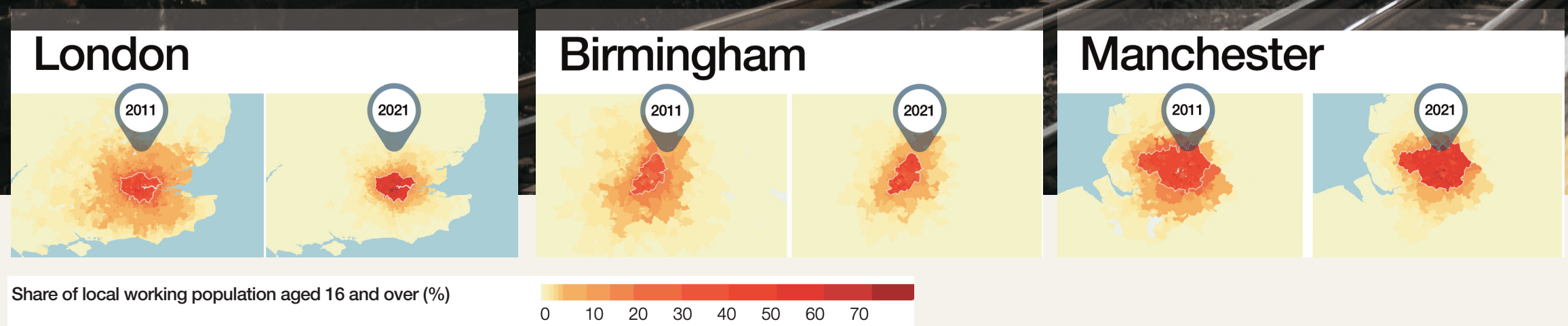
The challenge for leaders and the senior team within organisations is how do you bring something that's more compelling, how to you make work something that really brings value to people. If leaders are thoughtful about this they are asking - what sense of meaning can we bring to our workforce, what are we creating that people can step into and feel this is a worthwhile way to spend their life and that it is a good way to make a difference, a contribution with **work being a key ingredient to a happier, more enjoyable and fulfilling life.**







source: The Financial Times (27th October 2023)



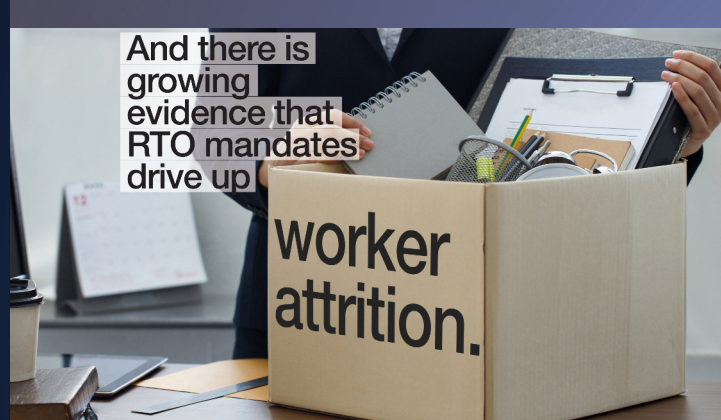


Globally there are tens of millions of workers resisting regular return-to-office days.



**72%** of recently surveyed companies say they have now mandated office returns.

source: XY Sense



And there is growing evidence that RTO mandates drive up

worker attrition.





We have entered an era where organisations need to earn high levels of in-person attendance with environments which help them be both individually productive and socially connected.

source: XY Sense

In the workplace we now need to be creating spaces that help people feel valued, more vibrant and engaging spaces that show that each of us matter. Our workplace spaces and the furniture and objects within them now matter in a way that we are only just beginning to understand, whether it's the conversations they enable or the mood they convey.

We don't know what's going to happen but it's unlikely that it's going to be anything other than a bumpy ride and the leaders of our organisations need to take a much bigger role in shaping people's wholeness and wellness. **The workplace cannot be a drain on peoples already drained attention span, our workplace will have to boost people's resilience through the next three years, and beyond.**





Providing experiences that are aligned to purpose and enriches lives by making people happier, healthier, and more productive in the office.

source: XY Sense

‘Maximising people’s sense of belonging

and moving on from the sense of isolation created by Covid and more recent events, by getting rid of anything that divides us by status, or leaves some people excluded is now a critical asset within a successful organisation.’

Organisations can do a lot to help this, they can create workplaces that people really look forward to coming into and creating work dynamics and **a workplace culture that has a replenishing quality**. Social, dynamic, caring, and inclusive community spaces that are not just for transacting business. We have to create shift by creating spaces that give agency, that celebrate making a contribution within a diverse community that has a productive buzz and banter going on within upbeat spaces.

And it's this landscape that *Beyond the Desk* has been designed to answer, rather than working within a fully open and reductive

hard surface dominated desk landscape. *Beyond the Desk* creates a softer, more colourful, and more domestic upholstery system with table working at its centre.

Enclosed work settings that fluidly connect to adjacent spaces via a design language that embraces this need to create - a replenishing quality. Social, dynamic, and inclusive community spaces that are convivial to work in that are also as effective and productive as the need to be.





40% of office floors are under-utilised.



Will the Hybrid workplace prove to be more productive than the pre Covid workplace?

Is now a widely shared observation and was certainly the centre of attention in an FT article from October 2023 where Pilita Clark headlined with ‘**The ghastly modern office needs a reboot**’, suggesting that “Hybrid working has exposed wasteful, outdated designs that one Silicon Valley boss wants to blow up”.



“Workplaces were designed according to principles that need to be

completely blown up

In the next year or two”.

Brian Chesky  
Airbnb co-founder and chief executive



In the article she sourced the highly regarded real time occupational data from XY Sense (XY Sense Workplace Utilization Index Q2 2023) which tracks office space use through 25K workspaces globally. Their data from the US, Hong Kong, the UK and six other countries showed walled meeting rooms are now the most heavily used office space by a long shot. With employees using them on average 67 per cent of the time, compared with just 13 per cent for cheaper, wall-free “breakout spaces”, and demand is rising.

“Even though our rate of occupancy is lower than before the pandemic, our meeting room demand is now higher than ever,” said one tech company HR executive quoted in the report.

“The biggest complaint I get is that our mandate is supposed to encourage more collaboration, but on some days, there is nowhere to collaborate!” The article suggested, ‘This is not a trivial problem. It makes no sense to waste costly property space, yet that is precisely what is happening thanks to hybrid working. More than a third of office desks are never used, even though workstations in a typical, traditionally designed office take up around 80 per cent of the floor space’.

In the same article Clark reports on the thoughts of Brian Chesky, the Airbnb co-founder and chief executive, who suggests “We still seem to not have enough meeting rooms, almost every desk is empty and almost every [meeting] room is full. This shows that even the smartest workplaces were designed according to principles that need to be “completely blown up. In the next year or two, we are going to design what we think the office of the 21st century, or at least this decade, might look like.”

Which rings true here at *Orangebox* both in the diverse research we are continually accessing and with the client projects that we are collaborating on. Together with the success we are experiencing with of our diverse landscape of meeting rooms, *Campers & Den's*.

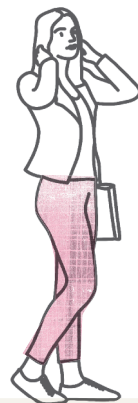
We believe the new potential of configuration choices available within *Beyond the Desk*, combined with the expansive range of enclosed rooms available in the *Campers & Den's* programme will go a long way to satisfy the new Hybrid workplace requirements being experienced by Brian Chesky at Airbnb.

“We still seem to not have enough meeting rooms,

almost every room\* is full”

Brian Chesky  
Airbnb co-founder and chief executive

\* meeting room



The *Generation Playlist* and *Beyond the Desk* narrative can create confidence through this period of profound ‘no turning back’ change and economic turbulence.





# ‘Enclosed collaboration spaces (meeting rooms)

continue to lead as the most popular collaboration space type (56% average utilisation).

Open collaboration spaces such as stand-up desks or break-out seating are the least popular space type.

Enclosed rooms are the most utilised collaboration space type at 67% but also have the lowest average occupancy (41% full).

Meeting rooms sized for 2-3 persons are most optimally used relative to their capacity (90% full on average).



*Beyond the Desk* answers the new Hybrid need to create a diverse landscape of solutions within the open plan workplace, from a single and coherent product range. Where effective personal spaces (for working in splendid isolation) can be positioned adjacent to spaces that facilitate working with a colleague, a couple of colleagues or a small team, or connected into a much larger town hall gathering. **All within one fluid, easy to understand, use and modify system.**



# +64% Collaboration Spaces

(meeting rooms, soft seating, stand-up tables and open kitchen areas) **are utilised +64% more than desks on average.**

source: XY Sense





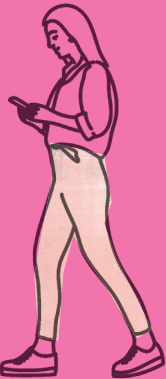
# Related reading



## Acknowledgment of Sources

Within this document we have accessed various reports and published articles for which we are grateful, when we have quoted directly, we have endeavoured to attribute and on multiple occasions we source the XY Sense report (Workplace Utilization Index Q2 2023) and The FT article of 1st Oct 2023 ‘The ghastly modern office needs a reboot’ by Pilita Clark.

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