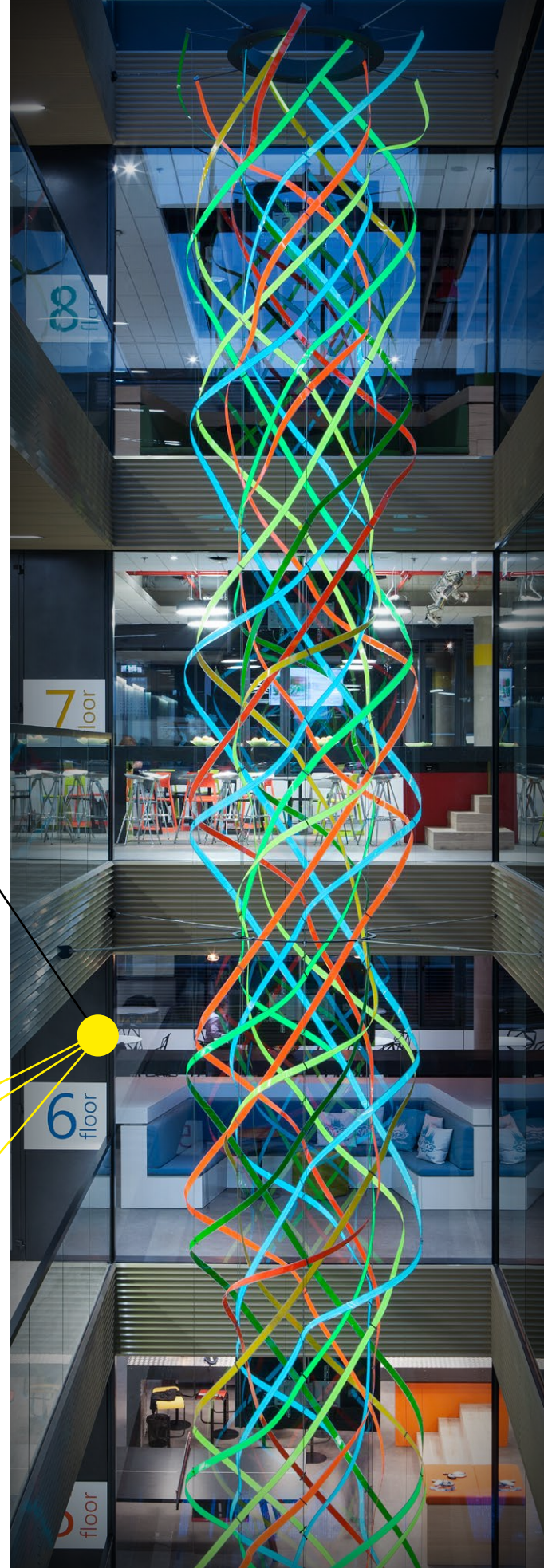


NEW WORLD OF WORK

People ●
Technology ●
Place ●



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Dear Friends,

Skype's development team in the Czech Republic has come a long way in the past five years. In 2012, there were roughly 40 of us in Prague developing the world's most widely-used communications platform. Today, we employ almost 250 highly-qualified developers from 29 countries. We are Europe's largest development subsidiary for Skype, and we believe that we will continue to grow in the future. Due to our rapid expansion, demands on our work environment have grown as well. Our new offices fully meet these demands. These include the need for ample work space, modern

technology and, above all else, an office layout that offers limitless possibilities for creative, innovative thinking. Skype has always tried to keep its start-up spirit: even after 12 years of doing business. It's precisely this spirit that we take with us to our new office space.



Tomáš Vocetka
Director, Skype
Czech Republic

January 2016

Dear reader,

How do you know they are working? That's the most common response I get from people when I tell them about Microsoft's philosophy of letting people work from places where they are most productive, rather than requiring them to be constantly present in the office. In the New World of Work (the name we've given to our work style strategy for the digital age and which describes our move to new offices in October 2015 after a two-year work culture change process), most of us – including myself – have given up designated personal desks.

Of course, flexible work structures are not for every person and every job. The key point, however, is to acknowledge that today – in more and more professions - work is something you do, not "just" a place you go to. In the knowledge economy, collaboration and innovation are key drivers of value creation. Workplace design has a huge impact on how people cooperate and share and develop ideas.

Our lifestyle is changing too. People need (and want) to be held accountable for their results, not for the time they spend in a certain place. An increasing number of employees believe that their lives would be better if they could work in a flexible environment. They say that a flexible work structure is an important factor in their decision to change their job. The old days when we managed people by telling them what to do, and controlling when and where they do it, are quickly becoming a thing of the past. The sooner we accept that "unseen" does not mean "unproductive", the better. Can a successful company afford to ignore this trend and risk losing its best talent?

While it is new technology that enables this change, it is trust that is at the heart of it. At Microsoft, we implemented a culture based on accountability for results. We let employees decide when, where and how they work. We expect them to achieve agreed objectives, cooperate on projects, be available for colleagues and customers and be transparent about their location and capacity so that others can plan their work too. Each team makes its own decisions about how its members work and how often they want to meet face-to-face: personal interaction does not lose its importance in the digital world, quite the contrary.

In the digital world, the workplace is a strategic tool that helps us support cultural change and growth. In this publication, we would like to introduce to you what benefits we achieved and share with you our experience from this fascinating journey. I hope we will inspire you!



Biljana Weber
General Manager
Microsoft Czech Republic

January 2016

What does the New World of Work look like?

The journey to the New World of Work has three phases – technology, people and place – that mutually impact one another and that need to be connected such that they create a functional whole to support employee satisfaction, innovation and performance. In the New World of Work customers can try for themselves how our products and services can change their work and everyday lives.



Today's technology enables organizations and individuals to achieve more than they ever could before. However, it requires a readiness for cultural change.

Technology as a competitive advantage

Modern, mainly cloud-based, technologies enable people to work, communicate and create from anywhere. The mobility that the cloud provides is an important source of growth for organizations and the entire economy. One-quarter of businesses that intensively make use of mobility grow twice as fast as others and create jobs eight times faster.* The ability to achieve constant technological innovation is fundamental. A total of 90% of Fortune 500 companies that existed in 1955 are no longer around, because they didn't innovate fast enough. Previously, innovation was sudden and random and required big, one-off investments. Cloud technologies have changed that, because they allow organizations – no matter what their size – to achieve constant innovation without high acquisition costs. The ability to acquire and use new technologies smartly has become an important competitive advantage.

"We shape our buildings, thereafter they shape us."
Winston Churchill

Renaissance of the Office in the digital age

This work style changes the office's purpose and function. We don't need rows of uniform tables, but rather space where colleagues and business partners will want to meet and collaborate; space for team creativity as well as individual work and concentration. The option to work from anywhere does not mean the end of the office, but rather its renaissance: the birth of a space that supports a culture of change and a work style that provides the greatest value.

Information and knowledge are also becoming commodities and the key to success is to create an environment that fosters creativity, true sharing of ideas and creation of new relationships.

Culture based on trust and results

Technologies are a critical driver of change, but the core of change lies in corporate culture. Different roles in an organization have different levels of mobility. However, in the knowledge economy, more and more people create value not by carrying out pre-defined processes, but rather by acquiring and creating, assessing and processing and first and foremost sharing and developing information, knowledge and ideas. Research shows that today two-thirds of all information and knowledge work takes place outside the office.* Indeed, the possibility to work from different places helps create unique values and relationships. This of course requires a willingness to change the way we manage people and evaluate their contributions and results.

Fear of changes to entrenched processes ranks among the biggest barriers to introducing flexibility and mobility at work. This is a challenge mainly for middle management, who wish to leave directive-based management and direct checks behind and begin assessing people based on their results. People often ask us how we know whether employees, who are not in the office, are actually working. There are a number of ways to "know" this: a manager who assigns goals well and is in regular contact with his team knows this based on progress and the results of each project.

Why are we creating a New World of Work?

1. Respect for individual needs and life-styles:

We believe that everyone needs a different type of environment to achieve maximum productivity. This depends on the nature of the work one does, on personal needs and behaviors and also on life circumstances. Happy employees perform better and have better ideas.

2. Space for teamwork and sharing:

Flexibility and mobility at work do not mean the end of the office: quite the contrary. We need offices to support teamwork and meetings, because these are the source of innovation and quality relationships.

3. We want to be a sought-after employer:

Mobility and flexibility are rising on the priority scales of quality workers and talent. They are very important for the younger generation, as well as for parents of small children and people looking after elderly parents: basically, for everyone.

4. We want to inspire by example:

We want to share the benefits that we've achieved as well as the lessons we've learned. This way we can offer our customers not only inspiration, but also support and specific, first-hand experience.

Collaboration – more time, more ideas

The cohesive element for all four work levels at Microsoft and Skype are so-called hubs: co-working spaces that offer space for meeting, sharing, relaxing and entertainment after work. Each hub has a different theme. The hubs are connected by open stairways and foster communication and collaboration between teams.

Sports hub



Music and film hub is meant primarily for creative teamwork and collaboration



Open stairways make interaction between teams easier

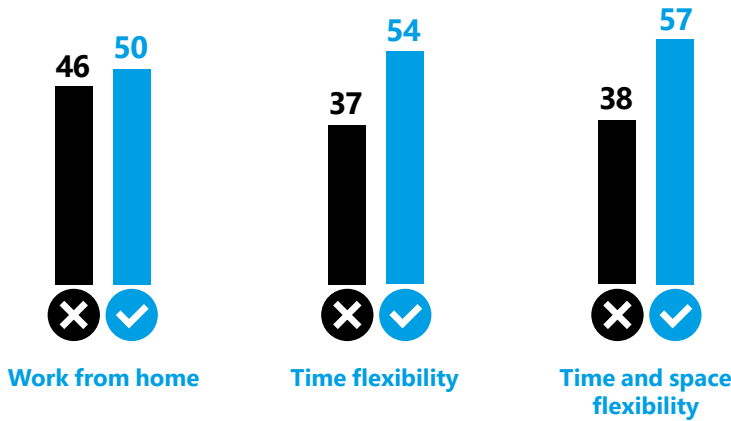
How do you know they're really working?

More than 10 years ago, Bill Gates announced his vision that the key to success in the global economy will be the ability to give individual workers the space and tools they need to be efficient and focus on work that creates the greatest value.

Today, people no longer work in isolation, instead collaboration and sharing are critical for innovation and growth. Experience and research show that in the knowledge economy people are more efficient and perform better when they can choose for themselves where and when to work. If they opt to work from home roughly two to three times a week, it has a positive impact on their performance, work satisfaction and relationship to their superiors*. People can also work at times, when they would have otherwise been traveling to and from the office.

How long do people work? Average number of working hours per week

Flexible working hours Non-flexible working hours



At Microsoft, we've introduced a culture based on trust and accountability for work done. We believe that each person requires a different environment in order to deliver the best work performance. When we give people the option to organize for themselves when, where and how they want to work, they will be happier. This is because they can better manage their personal and work needs and are thus more motivated and perform better. This approach also boosts personal accountability and independence.

During the transition to a flexible work style, it is important to set up the environment and processes such that change brings about the expected benefits.

The five most important areas include:

- Availability of quality **technologies** that have necessary functionality and that work reliably.
- Set up of relevant **processes**, such as essential training, records systems, approvals, etc.

"Over the past decade, software has evolved to build bridges between disconnected islands of information and give people powerful ways to communicate, collaborate and access the data that's most important to them. At Microsoft, we believe that the key to

helping businesses become more agile and productive in the global economy is to empower individual workers – giving them tools that improve efficiency and enable them to focus on the highest-value work."

Bill Gates, 2005

- Implementation of shared **calendars** so that everyone knows when and where a colleague is available.
- Establishment of **team rules** so that people meet regularly in person, but also so that individual flexibility does not disrupt team performance.
- **Support** for line managers and team leaders so that they can learn to assign work and manage people in a way that their team members understand goals well, can work independently, have regular opportunities to consult processes and possible problems and can share new ideas.

When a company introduces flexibility in the work space, or enables employees to work from anywhere, teams must be managed differently than before. But how do you do this in practice? Have a look at 10 tips that have proven useful to us:

1. **Set your goals well.** They have to be sufficiently specific and measurable so that they don't lead merely to formal box-ticking. Goals need to be inspirational enough to allow people to be proactive and look for their own solutions and not just wait for the next task.
2. **Communicate regularly with people in your team.** You will know that they have understood work objectives well and that they are headed in the right direction. Take time for an informal lunch or coffee with your colleagues every once in a while.
3. **Reward collaboration and sharing.** Both spontaneously as well as in performance reviews – ask how your colleagues help others with their work and, on the contrary, how they are able to build on their colleagues' input.
4. **Set up team days,** i.e. days during the week when everyone will meet at the office and when you will have larger or regular team meetings.
5. **Share this information with other teams too.** When someone needs to sort something out with your team, they will know what day is best for dropping by to see you.
6. **Open calendars.** At Microsoft we consider shared calendars a given. They enable us to plan our time better and organize meetings.
7. **Adhere to a principle of availability** during the standard work day and list exceptions in calendars. Don't expect others to respond to email during evenings or over the weekend.
8. **Use Skype for Business.** Our Austrian colleagues calculated that people's availability grew by 5% thanks to Skype, despite the introduction of the flexible work style. Based on color coding you immediately see, who is or is not online. You can send off a quick question instead of an email. When necessary, you can call someone or share documents remotely with just one click.
9. **Don't be afraid of remote meetings.** Give clear instructions on what meetings can be joined via Skype (don't forget to always paste a link directly in the invite) and which ones require in-person participation (plan these meetings for team days).
10. **Share common documents on OneDrive for Business,** then they will always be available to all relevant persons.



Space for customers

An office for the digital age provides a space where we can create and deepen relationships with customers and business partners. It is also a venue where we can show them how, thanks to modern technologies, they can do more at work and in their personal lives.



The Executive Business Center (space for business meetings) is located on the top floor of the building.



The spacious gallery on the ground floor offers diverse areas for formal meetings and informal appointments, as well as the option of trying the latest Windows devices.



An interactive Azure Wall displays visualizations of real data acquired during customer zone operations (Internet of Things).



Conference room for 150+ guests



Simulation of a living room equipped with technologies for the modern household

HOW, not where

In the past, we saw different approaches to office design: separated spaces that created feelings of isolation and limited communication between people, or fully open offices that made it difficult to concentrate. According to a recent study by Microsoft, almost one-fifth of Czechs work overtime because they feel too distracted during the day. The newest trend in office design has been playful, innovative spaces, whose purpose is to foster creativity and collaboration.

Each of these approaches focuses on one purpose and does not represent a conceptual response to how people work today. At Microsoft we view the office as a **strategic tool** that helps us support cultural change and growth. For us, it's critical HOW people work, not where they work. Our new office fulfills three main functions:

1. **More time, more ideas**

In the digital world one of the office's critical functions is to support meetings between people and the exchange of ideas and opportunities. So-called hubs (common, informal spaces connected across four floors) serve this purpose. Their central location and open stairways naturally lead to people occasionally meeting and communicating with one another. Random encounters afford opportunities to get unexpected views on issues and work tasks.

2. **Diversity of work spaces**

Work spaces build on the hub concept. We've created an ecosystem of various spaces meant for different types of work. Most people don't have their own desk, rather each employee chooses a spot that suits the task they are currently working on. In the offices they can choose either a standard or height-adjustable desk, should they wish to work standing up. They can choose a desk without a monitor or one with one or two monitors; a desk with dividers (partitions) or without.

In addition to standard conference rooms that have reservation options, it is important to have enough smaller meeting rooms: so-called focus rooms, which are meant for concentrated work, by individuals or for unplanned, short discussions with colleagues. You can't reserve these spaces. They are available to everyone at all times. "Phone booths" function based on the same principle – they are spaces for making phone calls. The office also has semi-open alcoves in the hallways for brief meetings, inspirational conference rooms for creative team work, relaxation zones, etc. The layout is also important: individual spaces are easily accessible and fit together and interconnect naturally.

3. **Customer relations**

The customer zone is a space that allows us to deepen our relationships with customers and business partners. Here, we can show them how they can do more at work and in their free-time thanks to modern technologies. On the ground floor there is a conference hall with more than 150 seats and various meeting rooms of different sizes. The space is connected through an open gallery that includes a café with comfortable seating, a corner area for informal meetings or work and a space for interactive demos of new technologies. The Executive Business Center on the 8th floor also offers informal sitting areas. It includes meeting rooms equipped with the latest technologies such as Surface Hub*.



A roof-top terrace creates a space for work, relaxation and fun.

When planning an office space, it is important to have good insight into how people really work and how the space impacts their behavior. Microsoft has a global team of specialists for workplace strategy (the Work Place Advantage program). This team combines the experience of specialized experts and individual subsidiaries, external and internal research, behavioral analyses and other tools in order to develop office concepts that foster innovation, productivity and employee satisfaction. Together with local teams, we apply these principles such that they respect local specifications and needs. Microsoft's new office in Prague is the most progressive application of this concept in the Central and Eastern European region.



Height-adjustable desks allow you to work standing up.

Engaging employees was a very important part of the change process. They could give input on the office appearance, put forward ideas, raise questions and discuss their concerns. A working group for change management then created and recommended rules for how things should function in the new office.

Diversity of workspaces

Cool meeting rooms (designed as replicas of a mountain cottage or a Czech pub) are spaces for generating out-of-the-box ideas and fresh perspectives.



Team meeting room meant for intensive teamwork. The room is equipped with the latest communications technologies and features: such as a writing wall for creative work.



Everyone can choose their workspace based on their momentary needs.



Alcoves for informal meetings



Kids' corner – a space for parents who sometimes need to bring their children to work



Focus rooms for unplanned meetings or for individuals needing to concentrate on their work

The cloud innovates for you

20 years ago email and the internet significantly sped up business. Today, the cloud is dramatically changing both business and our lives. People want to communicate and share things in the same way everywhere: at work and at home. The ability to acquire the newest technologies regularly and use them smartly has become an important competitive advantage.

Because it offers innovation as a service, the cloud gives even smaller companies options that previously had been available only to larger enterprises. It does this without high acquisition costs and thus represents an ideal solution for everyone: from start-ups to big corporations or state-run organizations.

Living Room: Technologies for life

A living room can be found in the customer zone. It is equipped with consumer technologies that allow visitors to try new products for Xbox, for Skype or on devices using Windows. Visitors can enjoy presentations on and experience specific scenarios common to the modern Czech family.

Meeting of the future

Some meeting rooms come equipped with the new Surface Hub*: a large, interactive touchscreen designed for presentations, brainstorming and teamwork both during meetings and after. The Surface Hub runs on Windows 10 and it includes applications such as Skype for Business and OneNote. It is equipped with cameras, microphones, sensors and a touchscreen display. The latter works as a drawing board, a tool for video conferences and a means of content-sharing. It allows for simultaneous editing by several people: either directly on the Surface Hub or remotely using their own devices. All content can be shared immediately in any of its current states. Surface Hub represents a new dimension of collaboration and removes traditional barriers to efficient meetings – either in one place or remotely.

We want to lead by example in showing organizations how to manage this trend; how to make the most of innovation and be an attractive employer for future generations.

Internet of Things live

There are a number of Kinect sensors in the customer zone. They collect non-personal data (i.e. information on how full the space is, noise levels, etc.) and use the Microsoft Azure cloud service and the Power BI analytical tool to create real-time visualizations and analyses. These are displayed on an interactive big screen called Azure Wall. The wall can show both data directly from the nearby customer zone, as well as any other chosen data from anywhere in the world. You can control data projections using gestures.

As a standard practice this approach enables businesses to continually:

- identify where visitors gather most often (in the café or the shop) with an aim to pinpointing the best spot for presenting products,
- measure interest in a certain product or service,
- optimize use of meeting rooms, parking spaces and transport,
- improve cleaning services or supply of stock,
- plan repairs and maintenance of machines at the right time, i.e. prior to their breaking down.



Science Hub

The entire solution is based on an “Internet of Things” concept. Today, almost every organization has a number of sensors and devices (its “things”) that generate various data from which new knowledge and value can be easily and quickly obtained.

Collaboration

Cloud-based Office 365 supports collaboration in offices and remotely; all in one package that works on all key platforms: Windows, OS X, iOS and Android.

You can work on the same project with other colleagues at the same time and have an overview of all edits that anyone has made.

Use your favorite Office applications such Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote and others: both for desktop (offline) work and as an online service using your web browser.

You will gain access to a professional email application, shared calendars, chat and video-conferencing as part of Skype for Business. You will also have cloud-based storage as part of OneDrive for Business.

You can access everything from any device (computer, tablet or phone). Office 365 also belongs to the Microsoft cloud services that received validation from EU regulatory authorities for data privacy and security commitments (find out more at www.microsoft.cz/vyjadreni).

Cloud and Me

René Keyzlar,
Office Division Manager



Today, the cloud is an integral part of my life: both at work and at home. As a father who spends a lot of time traveling for business, I appreciate the opportunity to be in constant contact with my family through video-calls on Skype. My whole family has continual access to the OneDrive for Business data storage server, where we store our family photos, videos and documents. So even while I’m travelling I know what my daughter drew at kindergarten and what hairstyle my son chose to “sport” at school. I am also able to check my son’s presentations or other documents he’s prepared for school: without having to access his computer. The cloud has completely changed how I work. I get to decide if I will work from home or at the office. I often do my morning work on my tablet while still in bed: every morning I reply to emails that arrived over night and I use this time to connect quickly via Skype with my colleagues at the headquarters in Redmond (which is 9 hours behind our local time). I can also avoid morning rush hour on my way to work. Thanks to that, I save time and at work I can concentrate on important projects, meetings with colleagues, customer events and various partner training sessions. If I happen to be working from home, I use the time saved by not having to commute to the office to run or to relax in other ways. I now have time for things I used to neglect or that I couldn’t afford to spend time on.

Development across continents

Introducing a flexible work style is different for each organization: as seen by the examples provided by our customers on the following pages. A number of companies introduce flexibility gradually. We ourselves conceived our “move to a New World of Work” as a two-year, transformational project. We use a tool that assesses the profiles of individual work positions to analyze the degree of mobility for individual subsidiaries or teams. Based on these analyses, we propose a specific office set-up. Thus, the Czech subsidiary could respond to a different work style for the Skype division and create an office that allows us to connect both teams, while still respecting their needs.

Skype in the Czech Republic has gone through very dynamic development over the past 4 years: it went from approximately 40 employees to almost 250 highly-qualified software engineers from 29 countries worldwide during 3 years. The new office is equipped with the newest technologies; for example, Surface Hub, Lync Room System, dedicated team conference rooms and so-called focus rooms. All these rooms are standardly equipped with two TV monitors; one of which is touch screen.

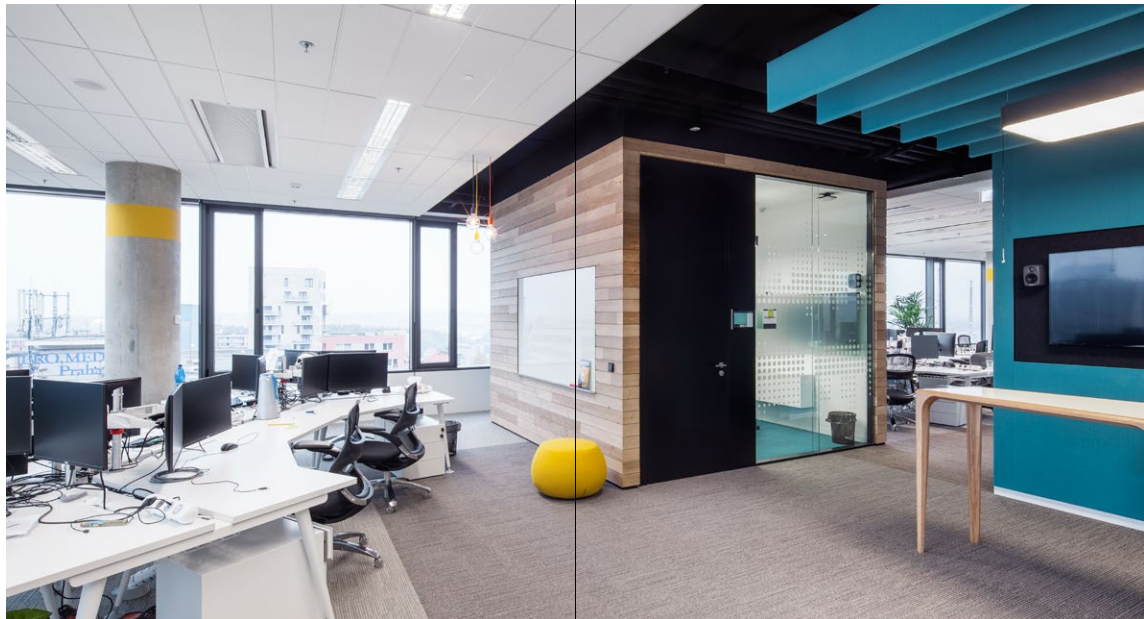
Most workers in the Skype division are developers, who often work on confidential projects that require cooperation with teams from around the world. Thus their work requires a permanently dedicated workspace. Skype adapted its space to the principles of agile software project management, which is based on independently organized teams that are responsible for quality work that is delivered on time. These teams are very autonomous; they set their own goals. The manager’s role is to ensure the necessary work environment and equipment for the team to function. In the case of Skype, these processes are applied to teams, whose members work all over the world (i.e. a distributed work system). So the

Prague offices communicate daily with Tallinn, Stockholm, Luxembourg and London in Europe; and Palo Alto and Redmond in the USA.

One of the most widely-used, agile methods for software development is Scrum. In Scrum, a team works as a separate and independent unit, where individual members with specifically defined roles work closely together to achieve a common goal. The team organizes itself via regular, daily, personal communications or through online collaboration among all team members regardless of where they are located. Scrum’s key functional premise is based on the understanding that customers can change their minds during a project’s lifetime and that unforeseen tasks and changes to work briefs cannot be handled using traditional planning. On the contrary, the team has to be as flexible as possible. It has to react quickly, efficiently and without unnecessary time or organizational delays.

The biggest benefit of this work style is that team members are not afraid to make use of new processes, change tried approaches, etc. They are personally active in problem-solving.

Given that a number of teams are international, they tend to be flexible as concerns ability to communicate and collaborate globally. It is also the team’s responsibility to consult project processes regularly with the customer and react in a timely manner to eventual changes in customer requirements.

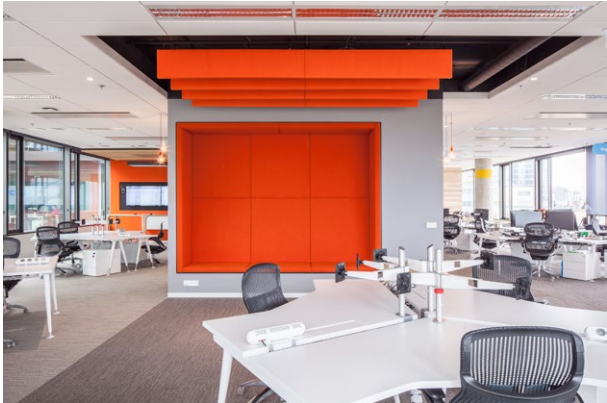


Scrum Space (photo on the right)

Each team has its own conference room.



Alcoves can take the place of conference rooms for short meetings.



Nestlé: mobile and flexible

The option of not having to wait to return to the office, but rather to work practically anywhere at anytime: from home or in the field. Food company, Nestlé Czech Republic and Slovakia, wanted this type of mobility and flexibility for its employees. So it equipped two hundred of its sales reps with HP ElitePad 1000 tablets with the Windows 8.1 system. The tablets function as mobile devices when visiting customers and are easy to run; and it's still possible, for example, to handle goods on shelves. At work or at home, once connected to a docking station or a larger monitor, the tablet replaces a full-fledged desktop computer.

"We had mobile devices in the past. They were however out of date: both technically and conceptually," describes Jan Vokoun, manager of the company's sales team. *"Previously, we had technology from the last century, now we have a system that meets today's demands,"* he says adding that the main benefits are the option to access business apps from anywhere, full compatibility with company systems and strong security.

"Thanks to our current solution, our sales reps have information right at their fingertips when in the field, and they are able to use it easily and efficiently when meeting with clients. They can also react quickly to customer needs," describes Mr. Vokoun. Tablets equipped with Office applications, including Microsoft Lync tools for audio- and video-conferencing, enable sales reps to make orders and print documents on-site. *"Sales reps can also present new products to customers, advise them on how to display goods or help them select stock volumes based on previous orders,"* continues the manager. They can also check inventory stocks and update customer databases.

Fast data transmission in both directions

Sales reps are also able to gather data quickly and send it to the central office.

There, it is processed into reports and prepared for availability to other employees. Thanks to the LimiGO application, adapted specifically for Nestlé's needs, company management sees current data and information from all its sales reps in real-time. It can set priorities that sales reps should currently focus on. *"The tablets are equipped with high-speed internet*



"Thanks to tablets, Nestlé sales reps are more mobile and flexible."

Jan Vokoun, manager of Nestlé's sales team

connections, so we are able to transfer data from sales reps to the central office and back to them on a regular, and ad hoc, basis," explains Mr. Vokoun.

Moreover, thanks to automated data synchronization between tablets and other devices and systems, administrative work has been cut significantly. *"We also used to require that our sales reps provide, for example, photo documentation. The employee then sat at home in the evening, downloaded photos from his/her phone, gave them descriptions and sent them off by email or saved them to the joint storage server,"* explains Mr. Vokoun. Today, sales reps no longer need to do this.

They also needn't worry about data security. *"We have our customer data on the tablets, we enter it into orders. This means that we need our devices to comply with security requirements,"* describes Mr. Vokoun, while mentioning security features such as data backup, access passwords or the option to delete data remotely from devices, should they be lost or stolen.

Integrated with new technologies

The introduction of such a system is a long-term project and Nestlé prepared it a year in advance.

"Microsoft provided us perfect service. It helped us sort out problems in the system as well as train the people who use it," emphasizes Mr. Vokoun.

Meanwhile, the company is also already thinking about the future. According to Mr. Vokoun, it is necessary to continue to develop and keep up with the times; even as concerns technical solutions. *"Anyone looking for a solution that will one day be complete will never find it. This system is very stable; however, market dynamics demand constant changes. We continue to work on further system improvements that will help our sales reps make their work faster and easier. This ensures that the customer receives the best service possible from our end,"* concludes the manager.

OKIN Group: fast growth thanks to the cloud

OKIN Group, which provides comprehensive services for the supply of enterprise processes and integrated facility management, is growing fast. As part of its relocation, it was the first Czech company to shift all its IT services to a cloud environment that offers its growing business the flexibility it needs. *"When moving into a new space, we decided that we wouldn't update our hardware, but that we would transfer our IT services to the cloud instead,"* says Martin Polepil, CIO at OKIN Group. The company had experience with Office 365 cloud services and Skype for Business, and so it chose the Microsoft Azure platform for this project.

OKIN Group was established more than 20 years ago as a company with five employees. Today, it is growing dynamically and provides work for more than 3,000 people. *"In the BPS division, which is the motor for our growth, we will hire more than six hundred new employees this year; meanwhile, 73% of these jobs have a technical focus,"* describes Martin Polepil.

Thus flexibility is essential for the company. *"Cloud solutions have the advantage of quickly boosting performance,"* says the company rep adding that hardware purchases would not provide the company this variability. *"We would either have to have hardware with excess scale or boost its scale all of a sudden,"* he explains, noting that with cloud products, the company doesn't buy "hardware by the piece", but instead it purchases computing power. So the IT infrastructure doesn't hold the company back. On the contrary, it helps expand services at any rate, anywhere in the world; all while still saving on costs.

Making use of artificial intelligence

The company's investment in the Datlowe start-up (a business that deals with



"We want machines to do repeat, routine work and employees to afterwards complement this with value-added services. This will create a perfectly functioning whole."

Martin Polepil, CIO at OKIN Group

processing big data by using artificial intelligence, machine text reading, voice recognition and machine learning) supports OKIN Group's innovative focus. *"The start-up works with a progressive solution which involves the automated set-up (creation) of servers based on momentary need for computing performance. Thus we make maximum use of the potential of hourly payments for performance capacity used in Microsoft Azure. When we need more*

performance, 20 servers switch on. When we don't, then only one may be running," explains Martin Polepil. *"We want machines to do repeat, routine work and employees to afterwards complement this with value-added services. This will create a perfectly functioning whole."*

"Microsoft Azure is, in our opinion, well secured," says Mr. Polepil. The company also wants to move further in the direction of cloud services in the future. *"We are testing an option where we will boost performance for a certain number of days when it is time to send out payroll. At other times we will decrease it,"* he explains.

"Our people don't have to spend so much time tending to administration and development of basic IT. So they have more room to introduce new solutions and improve customer service," concludes Martin Polepil.

RWE: Nový styl (Great Place to Work)

Flexible forms of work that allow employees to manage their time based on their own needs and achieve better work-life balance. RWE, which supplies natural gas, electricity and other services to 1.7 million customers in the Czech Republic, offers such flexible work options to its employees. Today, they can work from home as part of flexible working hours and can make use of shared and flexible jobs. Modern technologies from Microsoft allow them to do so. The New Style project, which has been running for two years now at RWE, also includes the creation of a modern work environment with creative spaces, shared work sites and social and relaxation facilities.

“Today, our employees can make use of flexible working hours, such as home office, home working, flexible work schedules, shortened or shared jobs, etc. to a much larger degree,” says Erika Vorlová, HR director at RWE Czech Republic, enumerating the project benefits. The company employs over 4,000 people: ranging from top managers to positions in the customer segment and on to distribution workers. Flexible work style has afforded benefits to both the company and its employees. Workers are more motivated and perform better. It is also noticeably easier for them to return to their jobs following parental leave.

“The combination of flexible work options and a modern work environment also allows us much more efficient use of space and significant reductions in costs for building rental and administration,” states Ms. Vorlová. Moreover, the company can employ a larger number of people from different fields and also attract potential employees as a progressive, flexible employer that keeps up with trends.

Making use of technologies

According to Ms. Vorlová, modern technologies are the basis for a flexible work style. Each employee has to always be online, have the option to work and communicate with other team members from any place with an internet connection.



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Erika Vorlová, Director of Human Resources at RWE Czech Republic

“A big benefit of our cooperation with Microsoft is that tools for document sharing and new forms of communication (such as instant messaging, audio- or video-conferencing or enterprise social media) are now provided to us as part of the Microsoft Office 365 service,” describes Ms. Vorlová. Each employee has a tool for remote communication, Skype for Business. Many work and project teams use the internal social network, Yammer. “The implementation of a very useful tool,

Microsoft SharePoint, is currently under way,” adds the director.

Thanks to new technologies, employees save on time they had previously spent making business trips throughout the Czech Republic. “Today, it’s enough to join a video-conference on Skype and hold a remote team meeting. You can also share documents from anywhere and work on them together. Also employees, who today no longer have to spend so much time traveling to work, save time,” states Ms. Vorlová. Thanks to clearly visible user status notices in the system, team leaders and other members of the team immediately know if an employee is busy, available or not in the office.

Employee training

“We successfully completed the project’s pilot phase during last year. Many teams from all companies in the group voluntarily joined the project. At the same time, we carried out the full reconstruction of our office space in Varenská Street in Ostrava. This year we are planing building renovations in Prague, Pilsen and Hradec Králové,” describes Ms. Vorlová.

New World of Work: what is the business case?

There is a strong, many times proven, business concept behind the New World of Work project. More than three-quarters of all Microsoft offices worldwide have implemented it or are in the process of doing so. In Central and Eastern Europe, the number is 9 out of 10 subsidiaries.

What benefits have we achieved in the New World of Work?

Current status

Status before moving

In a smaller office space, we are able to create a **more pleasant, more practical and more efficient work environment**.

- Overall **office space** for Microsoft has been reduced by almost **one-fifth** compared to before.

The new office is considered a great place to work and makes people feel proud of their work environment...

9 out of 10 employees

Employees are more satisfied, for flexibility enables them to achieve better work-life balance.

- 84%** of employees confirmed that thanks to **flexibility** they have more time for their family life; meanwhile, it is easy for them to connect to colleagues.
- Year-on-year employee **satisfaction** grew by **10%** (employee satisfaction survey).

84% of employees

... appreciate flexibility

At the same time, we have **better and more space for developing customer relationships**, hosting social and educational events and presenting our solutions.

- 80%** of employees stated that the new office allows them to show customers the use and benefits of modern **technologies** at work.

According to...

8 out of 10 employees

... the new work site facilitates collaboration.

78% of employees

... the new office boosts innovation.

74% of employees

... consider themselves very efficient thanks to the new environment.

This approach has improved Microsoft’s **employer brand** and helps the company retain employees. Management based on trust boosts feelings of individual accountability and gives people room to look for their own ways to achieve their goals.

- According to our research, HR managers report that corporate culture based on **trust** is an important criterion for **two-thirds** of young people in the Czech Republic when choosing a job.
- 8 out of 10** employees stated that the new office encourages **innovation** and that they feel free to innovate, they trust each other and they share ideas.

According to...

78% of employees

... the new office boosts innovation.

74% of employees

... consider themselves very efficient thanks to the new environment.

* If not stated otherwise, employee opinions from the research survey come from the period before moving to the new office and after (a difference of 14 months).

22 Source: Euro, Markéta Žižková

Come take a look and get inspired!

We invite you to visit our offices designed for a world where cloud technologies enable as yet unseen mobility. They're made for a world where more and more people can work from anywhere and where the office has become a space that fosters meetings and collaboration. The office also offers diverse spaces for individual work, concentration and relaxation.

**If you are interested in a
tour, please connect with
your contact person at
Microsoft.**