

5 inspiring practices for a successful transition to unassigned seating: Change Management

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This is the second of two articles presenting 10 inspiring practices for a transition to an unassigned workplace. Read also [5 inspiring practices on space utilization strategies](#).

1. Developing a leadership action plan

It is crucial to have an action plan for executives and managers so that they understand the change, and communicate it to their teams.

The two main objectives with this plan are to ensure leaders:

- Understand and personally commit to the change, overcoming any initial resistance.
- Are equipped to conduct the change within their teams.

This action plan will include regular information and update activities, to be communicated by your [project sponsor](#).

2. Using a pilot project floor to fine-tune the change management plan

Transforming one of your current floors into a workspace with unassigned seating, incorporating some of the utilization strategies from the [SWAG guide](#), such as creating a quiet zone and centralizing personal storage spaces, will greatly enrich your change management plan.

By conducting trials with a smaller group, you can more easily gather feedback and observe whether the integration is smooth and if employees are adopting the expected behaviors. This will also enable you to identify and resolve any irritants before the official opening.

Such a pilot space can also be part of your overall plan to educate employees. You can have teams test the space, for example, by rotating branches and allowing each team a two-week trial period.

3. Promoting employee experimentation while managing expectations

Incorporate language that fosters openness to testing and experiencing unassigned seating. By treating this transition as an experiment, you open the door to dialogue and reassure employees: they will be able to try things out, express themselves, and see that the project team is open to making adjustments. You'll need to provide feedback mechanisms so that employees can have their say.

However, you need to manage expectations realistically with this approach. People should expect a period of 3 to 6 months before adjustments are made, and not all requests will be processed.

4. Intensifying and diversifying activities as the launch approaches

As the implementation of unassigned seating approaches, you'll need to step up your activities. The four weeks leading up to your launch are a key time. Use all available channels to educate and inform employees, as their attention is at its highest at this time, and this will have a direct impact on the appropriate use of the new space.

Plan walkthroughs, Q&A sessions, distribute the employee guide, hold training events. Make sure managers relay information and are engaged in this final sprint to implementation. This will also require significant time and commitment from the project team and the change management team, so plan accordingly.

For more ideas, take a look at the [Change management Program in-a-box](#).

5. Focus on community-oriented messages

Fostering a sense of community could be beneficial to your project of adopting unassigned seating. Remind staff to think not just about those around them, but also the next person who will use that workpoint or boardroom.

Emphasizing the importance of community, respect and courtesy will not only ensure a pleasant working experience for all, but also help reduce complaints about behaviours regarding noise levels, cleanliness, room booking schedules, etc.

Consider engaging your human resources and informal conflict resolution teams to address this issue, as it also ties into the organization's values and ethics.