

Human experience is changing the future of work

 By [Ewout Holst](#)

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Helping people to feel good at work goes far beyond achieving work-life balance. It's about creating an environment that enables employees to feel engaged, empowered and fulfilled. Get it right and your workspace will not only be a critical part of the talent attraction and retention equation, but will also have a positive impact on business productivity and profitability.



Image source: www.pexels.com

JLL carried out a global research project, Workplace, Powered by Human Experience, to understand the workplace experience and its specific impact on business performance and to decipher how experiences can be shaped by real estate to achieve strategic performance objectives. South Africa was one of 16 countries included in the research and the results have pinpointed a few trends relevant to local corporate occupiers:

Make innovative workspace choices

Employees want more from their office space to help them work more effectively. While over 50% of South Africans now work in an open place office or some kind of shared space, the provision of innovative workplace amenities is generally low. Companies must provide more than just collaborative and convivial space. Co-working, telecentres, and even space for group experiences or hobbies should be considered. There is also a strong desire for more 'hospitality and lifestyle' services close to work, like exercise facilities or childcare provision. A variety of supplementary spaces reinforces workplace effectiveness, team culture and group cohesiveness.

It is interesting to note that when in the office, South Africans are less mobile and spend less time in alternative and secondary work areas than their global counterparts. By advancing agile, activity-based and remote working practices, South African employers could not only save on real estate costs, but could also give their workers greater choice about how and where they will work.

Keep that entrepreneurial spirit alive

The clear majority of workers crave a more entrepreneurial setting. This means that large corporates must work hard to foster an entrepreneurial culture to attract top talent. Entrepreneurship can be dramatically enhanced through workplace design and strategy by, for example, offering creative zones, collaborative areas, incubators and a variety of other spaces which give people more freedom to work where they choose. South African employees say that feeling trusted, being able

to show more initiative and acting with more autonomy all help create a stronger sense of empowerment at work.

Don't worry, be happy

Happiness is the number one priority for a positive workplace experience. Nearly 70% of global research participants agreed that happiness at work is the best ingredient to guarantee a unique work experience. What's more, nine in ten South Africans would like to see their companies appoint someone dedicated to driving experience and wellbeing at work. Think of it as a chief happiness officer!

This requires making sure work feels comfortable beyond the surface level of happiness. Employee health needs to be ingrained into the vision of the organisation, and creating positive experiences in the workplace will require companies to rethink their real estate and strategic direction. This should be balanced with rewards and recognition that boost belonging and satisfaction.

A place of work is far more than a property. It is a living environment that helps individuals and businesses craft and experience a better fusion of life and work. Engagement must come first, empowerment will drive change and fulfilment is the new happiness. This creative thinking should be at the core of every strategic and operational action in every company.

ABOUT EWOUT HOLST

Ewout Holst is head of corporate solutions, Sub-Saharan Africa, JLL. He joined the JLL team in Johannesburg to provide global portfolio strategies, transaction and strategic advisory and real estate solutions to corporates across the Sub-Saharan Africa region.

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