



Rana Florida

CEO, Creative Class Group

Creative Spaces: The Need for Space Outside the Office

Posted: 12/30/11 04:12 PM ET

I've had a very colourful career path. From [TV](#), radio, [news](#), and music labels, to zoos, aquariums, and even a circus to one of the world's largest [airport developers](#) in the traditional corporate world. As different as all these jobs were, they had one thing in common: their conventional management styles and lack of creative spaces.

From being forced to conduct Meyers-Briggs personality tests to turning out weekly status reports, from sitting through endless mind numbing meetings to feeling lost in a maze of cubicles, most corporate jobs -- to put it mildly -- are profoundly uninspiring.

As CEO of the [Creative Class Group](#) (CCG), I don't view myself as someone's boss. I value our [team](#) members for their contributions and give them the freedom and flexibility to do their work and manage their work lives from anywhere at any time. I don't check to see when they report to work or log on, nor do I monitor their lunch breaks. I don't concern myself with what they wear or how they look. They could work five hours a week or 70 hours a week; it's up to them to manage their work load and our [clients](#).

Knowledge and creative workers do not need prison wardens. Give them freedom and flexibility and empower them to do their work and they will be much happier, more loyal, and committed.

And then there's the matter of workspace.

We've moved from an agricultural society to one that was industrial, then knowledge-based, and now, creative. But the majority of our employers and working environments have yet to adapt.

Not only should creative class workers have control over when they work and what their work environment looks like, they should be allowed to choose their work environment as well. Even when they're not traveling, creative workers spend less time at their desks and more time in open

spaces, such as coffee shops, hotel lobbies, and street plazas. And then there are the growing legions of full-time freelancers, who have no set place of business.

We have an essential need for what I call "[Fourth Places](#)" -- hybrid spaces in which we can connect, exchange ideas, and dialogue. A place where we can relax if we want to and work even more productively than we can at the office.

In this newest installment of our [Creative Spaces](#) series, my colleague [Steven Pedigo](#) and I have assembled a slideshow to celebrate and congratulate those pioneers, some of whom we've worked with at [CCG](#), who are envisioning and actualizing new ways of living and working.

Our next Creative Spaces series will feature creative office spaces. Feel free to send photos of your innovative design to steven@creativeclass.com.

General Assembly, New York, New York



An innovation eco-system for technology and design startups, and a mixed-use space designed to provide entrepreneurs with a range of contexts suitable for realizing their ideas — whether they require privacy, team-based collaboration, or an open exchange with fellow members.

Photo credit: General Assembly

SoHo Beach House, Miami, Florida



The latest outpost of the international, members-only club for people in the media, film, and creative industries includes 50 rooms, a screening snug, two swimming pools, a beach club, as well as an expansive Cowshed spa and a Cecconi's restaurant open to non members.

Photo credit: Flickr user bisouschic

Richshaw Bags, San Francisco, California



A bag factory that makes office space available to freelancers in its loft and offers such amenities as high windows and skylights that provide natural lighting, as well as free bike parking, chilled water, evening and weekend hours, a refrigerator and a microwave and of course high speed Internet, a fax and a printer.

Photo credit: Loose cubes

LM Hub, Barcelona, Spain



The first Le Meridien Hotel to incorporate Le Méridien Hub experience, which re-interprets the hotels' lobbies as social gathering places for creative people, offering both guests and locals a creative atmosphere where contemporary, curated artwork sets the environment.

Photo credit: Robert Steiner

Third Ward, Brooklyn, New York



A “DIY utopia” (The New York Times) where artists, craftsmen, and graphic designers can take classes or rent studio space and freelancers of every stripe can rent desk space in its peerless co-working facilities—where “the wi-fi is fast, the conference room is available for unlimited bookings, and the iMacs are loaded with the latest design software.” Best of all, there is the opportunity to meet and interact with other creative freelancers.

Photo credit: Loose cubes

Spoke Club, Toronto, Canada



A private club conceived as a gathering place for individuals with an interest in media, entertainment and the arts. A comfortable hideaway to meet for a drink, eat well, entertain friends, catch a movie, or hold a formal business meeting in a fully-equipped conference room.

Photo credit: Robert Steiner

Makers of Barcelona (MOB), Barcelona, Spain



Housed in an old textile factory in the Eixample neighborhood, MOB has studio space for artists and designers as well as a meeting room and desks. “We are already hosting a variety of professionals and students from designers, artists, architects to social entrepreneur and journalists. Currently we have, in our maker space, a sewing machine, a circular saw, basic woodshop machineries, and in the near future, a 3D printing machine and a laser cutter. A ping pong table and a Wii is on its way!!!”

Photo credit: Loose cubes

New Work City, Frankfurt, Germany



Strategically located above the high speed train station at the heart of the Frankfurt International Airport and surrounded by restaurants and retail stores, this spectacular new facility offers temporary desks and administrative services for traveling executives and the facilities to hold a conference for more than 500 people. This is the place “to develop innovative ideas, efficiently advance your projects, network with your business partners and deepen your customer relationships in a blue chip environment.”

Photo credit: Christian Gahl, Harmut Naegle and Alexandra Voding

Betahaus, Berlin, Germany



Located in a former government office building, Berlin's Betahaus "vision of the space and its functions floats between Vienna coffee house, library, WLAN-Café, Home Office, Campus." Its amenities include three "separate meeting rooms, a separate telephone room and our café on the ground floor" as well as "a coworking space of approximately 700 sqm. Oh, and printer, scanner, WLAN. Voip telephone is of course a given."

Photo credit: Loose cubes