

A woman with curly hair, wearing a headset and a red plaid shirt, is holding a tablet and looking at it. She is standing in a modern office with other people working in the background. The office has large windows, white walls, and modern furniture. The text "Smarter Working" is overlaid on the left side of the image, with "FOSTERING ENGAGEMENT, PRODUCTIVITY, AND HAPPINESS AT WORK." below it.

Smarter Working

**FOSTERING ENGAGEMENT,
PRODUCTIVITY, AND
HAPPINESS AT WORK.**



Welcome to the evolution of work

The world of work has never been so full of opportunity and change. The pace of business continues to accelerate, and expectations for instant response, meaningful collaboration, and continuous innovation have never been higher.

At the same time, technology is becoming faster, smarter, and more accessible. The world is more within reach, and we are connected like never before. "Always-on" is embraced. We are being asked to collaborate better and at a moment's notice, from wherever we are—whether across the table or across continents—with people who have different work styles, and often more than one role to play. This evolution brings with it the possibility of transforming the way work gets done, for your people and your success.

Organizations have the opportunity to rethink their strategies regarding workplace environments, behaviors, and relationship to technology. Leading companies are adopting a new approach called Smarter Working—and they are experiencing the benefits that come with it.

Smarter Working: Wherever, whenever, and however people are most productive

Smarter Working is a way of mindfully helping organizations adapt to new challenges, and prepare them for whatever is next. It presents companies with small and effective steps that can be taken in three areas of focus—**people**, **places**, and **technology**—for a positive impact on business.

OPTIMIZING PEOPLE, PLACES, AND TECHNOLOGY

Smarter Working is an approach that puts **people** first by recognizing, accommodating, and nurturing their various work styles—whenever and wherever they work. It's about designing or choosing **workspaces** for those flexible work styles, to inspire and enhance performance. It's about harnessing **technology** to work seamlessly with people's needs. And it means establishing a culture that fosters trust, loyalty, autonomy, collaboration, and, ultimately, productivity.

When organizations adopt the Smarter Working approach, they unlock profitability and potential. They can improve business processes and efficiencies, and gain more relevant insights. Employee well-being is enhanced because people are empowered to work better. IT teams work smarter, with technology that fits employees' needs and reduces costs. HR departments are happier too, because they are put in a better position to acquire and retain the best talent. Whatever the size of your business, thinking about how, when, and where you apply the Smarter Working approach can help you improve business results and meet the demands of this new world of work.

When organizations adopt the Smarter Working approach, they unlock opportunities to empower employees, and help them be happier and more productive.

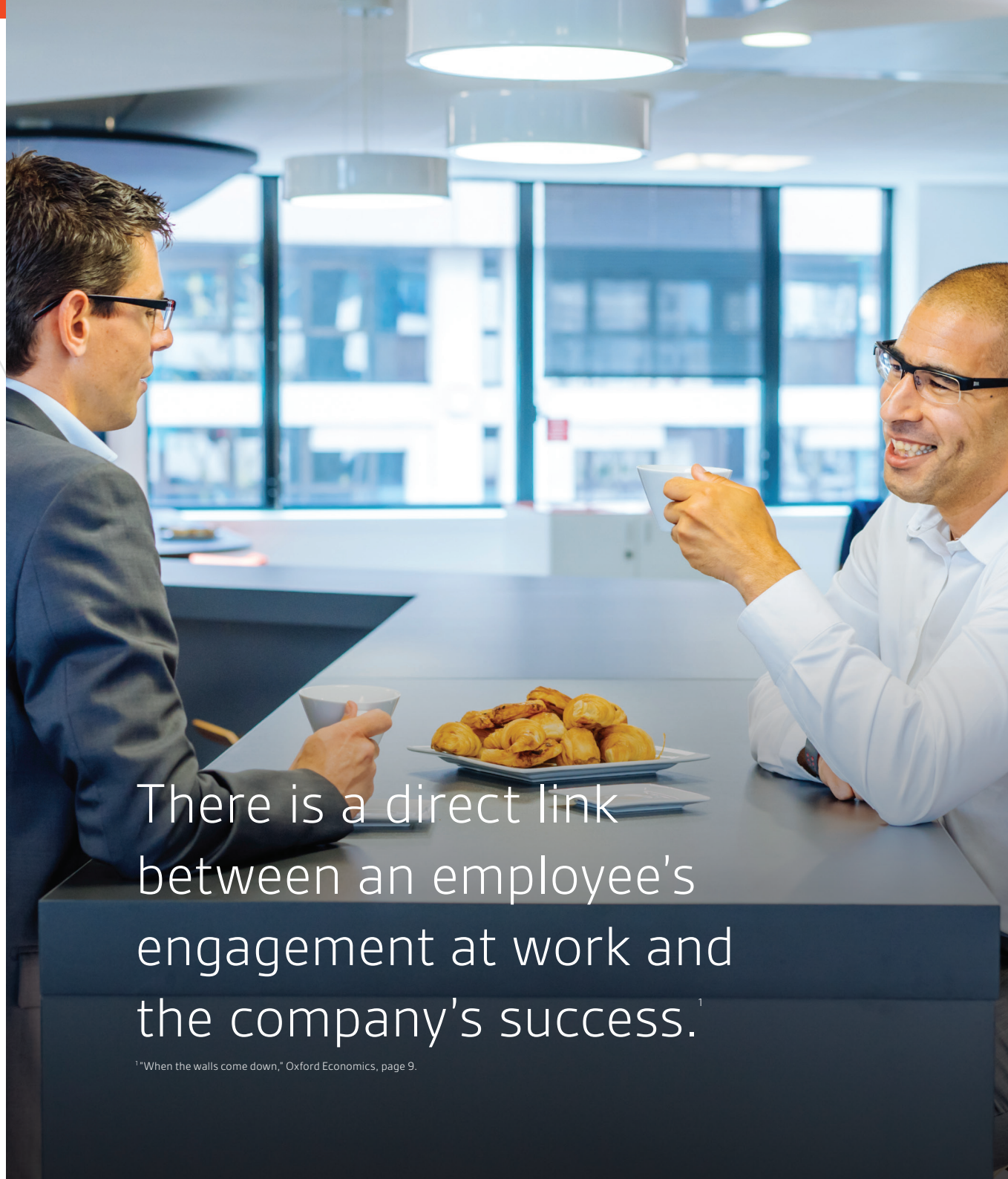


Keeping employees engaged strengthens an organization

It's never been more important, and perhaps more difficult, for people to be engaged in their work. Things move fast. People have the flexibility to work when they want, often outside 9 to 5. And they're working everywhere: in the office (where it can be noisy and filled with distractions) and out of the office (where it's often even harder to focus). But when people are engaged, it usually means they're happier. Plus, engaged employees outperform their peers in terms of productivity, sales, energy levels, healthcare savings, and lower turnover rates.

There is a direct link between an employee's engagement at work and the company's success.¹

¹"When the walls come down," Oxford Economics, page 9.



SMARTER WORKING HELPS PEOPLE BE AT THEIR BEST

The Smarter Working approach can help an organization enhance some of the factors that contribute to employee engagement and happiness.

First, it's essential that people have a choice of workspaces within their workday such as places to collaborate, unassigned desks, quiet spaces, or touchdown areas. Second, they need the right communication tools—those designed for them—to use seamlessly throughout their day. This has a wonderful effect. People are able to embrace their own work style, the way they work best. They feel like the company is listening to them, they're more satisfied with their job, and they are more likely to stay. So there is a greater sense of belonging, which promotes a culture of trust. This means they enjoy more independence and have more control over their day. This kind of supported autonomy breeds engagement for employees, and creates a company others will want to join.

WITH SMARTER WORKING, THE TALENT POOL WIDENS

When companies adopt a Smarter Working approach and provide an array of workspaces and communication tools, there is an additional (and big) advantage: the opportunity to recruit the best people, wherever they may be in the world. Because just like a great idea can come from anyone, great talent can come from anywhere.

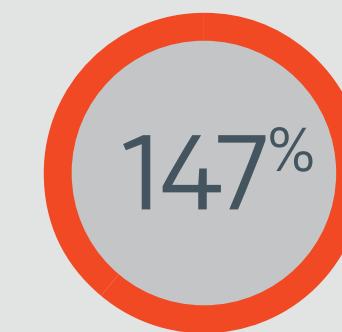
¹"When the walls come down," Oxford Economics, page 9.

²"The Engaged Workplace," <http://www.gallup.com/services/190118/engaged-workplace.aspx>.

A MORE SATISFIED WORKFORCE CONTRIBUTES TO BOTTOM-LINE PERFORMANCE

With Smarter Working, people have the tools and freedom to contribute to the company's success in their own unique ways. This is gratifying and provides a real sense of fulfillment. And that matters because employee satisfaction and productivity are closely tied to financial success.¹

Business Benefits



Companies with highly engaged workforces outperform their peers by 147% in earnings per share.²

THERE IS NO ONE
RIGHT WAY TO WORK.
BUT THERE ARE
BETTER WAYS.

Today it is absolutely true that one size does not fit all. No one works the same. Even two people with the same title may work very differently from each other. In fact, in a typical enterprise, there are seven key work styles that make up 91% of the staff.¹ That means multiple distinct needs and preferences supported by flexible policies, workspaces, and tools customized to the individual way each person works best.



Meet Olivia, the great office communicator.

After dropping off her 12-year-old at school, Olivia gets in at nine o'clock sharp. She sits at her desk, where everything is perfectly set up—because that's where everything happens. She'll check her emails (wishing she'd received fewer of them) and tuck away her cell phone (hoping she'll get as few calls as possible) and pick up the messages on her desk phone (familiar technology is friendly technology). She'll spend a good portion of her day exchanging ideas and collaborating with others virtually, but, if she could, she'd do it in person for that human connection.



Meet Carl, the super-connected, on-the-go executive.

After calling a few clients from the car on his way to work, Carl comes in and greets everyone. In mid-conversation, his cell phone rings. He silences it without missing a word. He only has 15 minutes to pick up a few things before flying out to the head office, where he'll work at an unassigned desk and hop on a video call to present to clients. Later on, he plans to get on the treadmill at his hotel, where he'll double check tomorrow's agenda before calling it a day. His technology is practically tied to his hip, and it's all he needs to work perfectly—that is how he stays connected.

Despite their differences, Olivia and Carl can both benefit from Smarter Working.

- Olivia needs her technology to function perfectly every time she uses it, or she might shy away from it forever, which could mean a lost opportunity for both her and the company.
- Carl needs his mobile technology to operate seamlessly at all times, or he could miss out on something critical to business.

IT Benefits

By recognizing that one size does not fit all and securing the right technology for the job, IT managers can help lower costs, boost efficiency, and raise employee satisfaction.



DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS.
DIFFERENT NEEDS. BETTER OUTCOMES.

More than ever, the aging workforce remains a vital part of an organization's success. They need Smarter Working tools that work as hard as they do.

- Most people over the age of 60 (62%) feel they are as strong physically and mentally at work as when they were in their 20s and 30s.¹
- 42% of people aged 50+ have some kind of age-related hearing loss.² It's essential to manage the noise around them, and ensure their calls offer crystal-clear quality.

Millennials are the most connected and mobile members of the workforce. Providing access to Smarter Working tools can help retain them.

- Millennials are more likely to emphasize mobile technology and connectivity as major influences in career development.
- They are focused on technology as a time-saver at work.
- They are more likely to take steps, like leaving their desks, to drown out noise, and to say that blocking out distractions increases productivity.³

¹"10 reasons why employing the over 50s makes business sense," <https://www.onefamily.com/hub/finance/10-reasons-to-employ-over-50s/>.
²"UK hearing loss facts and figures," <https://www.hearingaidknow.com/uk-hearing-loss-facts-and-figures> *
³DMG Research, 2017.

¹Plantronics Persona Research, 2017.

Sometimes alone. Sometimes together.

Always productive.

Today, work is really more of a state of mind than a place you go to perform a task. More often, people need the flexibility to work anywhere—to be mobile and connected, to collaborate and be productive. It all comes down to preferred workspaces and work styles. In the office, an employee might choose to sit at an open desk area, or move to an enclosed team room, or a dedicated focus space. Or they might choose to work from home or a coffee shop. Whatever the choice, people are spending less time at a personal desk (close to 10% less time than they did four years ago¹).

CLOSER TO EACH OTHER, NO MATTER HOW FAR AWAY

Let's also remember that teams are now dispersed around the world, working in different time zones, often calling in or joining a video conference. Though it may be difficult (if not

impossible) to physically optimize remote workspaces, companies can enhance their offices to improve acoustics for those calling in. For example, on-site meeting rooms can be mindfully designed to absorb sound and minimize echoes to help remote workers be more productive and feel more present in the room, letting them fully contribute to the work being done.

MORE THAN A WORKSPACE, AN 'ENVIRONMENT' DESIGNED FOR EMPLOYEES' NEEDS

Carefully considered workspaces allow for clear communication. Ironically, adding strategic noise to an office environment can help employees focus. White noise, pink noise, and innovative noise management solutions can block out unwanted noise and create a healthy

workspace that fosters individual concentration, as well as encourage team conversations. Additionally, incorporating environmental cues like natural light and plants can boost productivity and lower stress.

Ultimately, it's about thinking of the workspace as an environment unto itself, where it's easier to think, create, and deliver results. That's progress—and that keeps everyone motivated and engaged.

Business Benefits

Spaces that are effectively built around the type of work that needs to be done can result in more satisfied and productive employees.



NOISE: A REALITY THAT NEEDS TO BE MANAGED



- The #1 complaint at work is noise.¹
- The most common effect of noise is lower productivity.²
- When people can't get anything done in the office, they put in longer hours and accomplish less.³

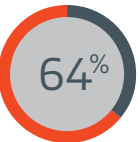
BOTTOM LINE: DISTRACTION AFFECTS PROFITABILITY



Over half of employees say ambient noise reduces their satisfaction at work.⁴



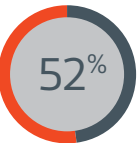
48% of them agree that when noise and distractions are absent, they can focus on the task in front of them.⁴



64% of employees say that being able to block out noise and distractions increases their productivity.⁴



It takes an average of 23 minutes for people to reorient themselves back to what they were doing before they were distracted.⁵



52% of them say that getting rid of noise and distractions reduces errors in their work.⁴



Elevated workplace or environmental noise can cause hypertension, heart disease, annoyance, and sleep disturbance.⁶

Getting the noise factor right boosts employee satisfaction and drives business value.⁷

¹Plantronics Persona Research, 2017.

¹Plantronics Persona Research, 2017.

²"The victims of open offices are pushing back," <http://www.bbc.com/capital/story/20140911-open-office-victims-push-back>.

³"Why The Office Is The Worst Place For Work," <https://www.fastcompany.com/3026355/why-the-office-is-the-worst-place-for-work>.

⁴When the Walls come down," Oxford Economics, page 3.

⁵"Can't get any work done? Blame your noisy, crowded office," <http://money.cnn.com/2014/11/12/pf/distracted-workplace/>.

⁶Passchier-Vermeer W, Passchier WF (2000). "Noise exposure and public health." *Environ. Health Perspect.* 108 (Suppl 1): 123-31. doi:10.2307/3454637. JSTOR 3454637. PMC 1637786. PMID 10698728.

⁷"When the Walls come down," Oxford Economics, page 9.

Technology with a single-minded purpose: A more human way to work

Technology was meant to enable us, not hinder us. Unfortunately, the latter is often the case: a remote employee chasing a call, conversations dropping out and resurfacing, and high-pitched sounds coming out of nowhere. This can create inefficiencies, waste time, cause frustration, and add costs. With the Smarter Working approach, systems are integrated with the way people work to promote productivity.

Today, technology is playing an increasingly purposeful, and more intuitive role in the way employees work—with flexible tools that serve people first. Moving with us comfortably and seamlessly, technology can act almost as an extension of ourselves. It feels natural and fits the individual needs of employees. The end result? Tools that are more effective, allowing people to achieve greater results.

TECHNOLOGY AS THE GREAT ENABLER, TODAY AND TOMORROW

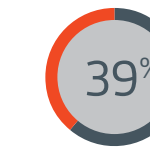
Technology today can offer deep insight into business calls through conversation, usage, and acoustics analysis. This data can help organizations improve their performance, providing knowledge that can be turned into greater insight and profitability. In the not-so-distant future, technology will focus on much more than voice or conversation. It will be seamlessly connected to the user's every device, movement, and activity, sensing the next task at hand and responding to it. When approached mindfully, new technologies will continue to bring people closer together, help them work smarter, and make the overall business more intelligent than ever.

¹Smarter Working brochure under the section "Value happiness and the innovation will follow."

When people feel that their systems have been designed with them in mind, they get a greater sense of personal control. Thus, they're far more engaged and invested in their work. That's good for business.



THERE'S ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT



39% of employees say they are frustrated with work technology.¹

TECHNOLOGY EMPOWERS PEOPLE AND POWERS SUCCESS

In the end, technology needs to enable employees and promote productivity by being integrated with the way they work. In fact, when people feel that their systems have been designed with them in mind, they get a greater sense of personal control. Thus, they're far more engaged and invested in their work.² The people win. The business wins.

IT Benefits

Responsive technology and insightful data can help organizations elevate performance, which can translate into better results.

¹"When the walls come down," Oxford Economics, page 9.

²Smarter Working brochure under the section "Value happiness and the innovation will follow."

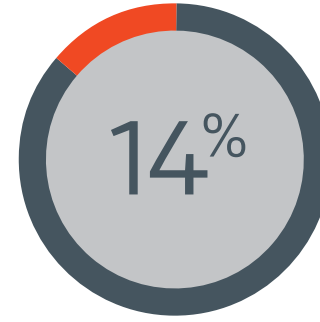
tone of voice is crucial to maintaining and building business

More than ever, we are communicating through a growing variety of communications channels, including online chat, email, and voice. Out of all of them, voice is king. It's the preferred mode of communication when people want to make sure the "discussion" is understood by both parties.¹

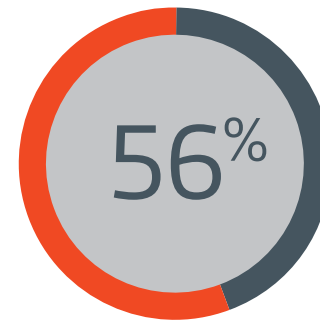
A classic study in human communication illustrates that when one can only hear (and not see) a person speaking, 87% of what is communicated is a result of that person's tone of voice.² This begs the question: What kind of experience are we creating among teams, colleagues, and with clients? Is it warm and human? Do people sound distant, or up close and professional? The highest quality and clarity of voice matters because the subtleties of the discussion can either foster or hinder relationships.

"79% of consumers have experienced poor voice quality when speaking with a business; 'stress' is the first word most used to describe their feeling about the call, and 'anger' is the second."³ These days, a "misunderstanding" can easily make its way onto social media, so it's important to pay special attention to how the message is being delivered. Additionally, with people working remotely more than ever before, there is a greater demand for seamless voice technology. Company reputations are at stake.

An average of 3 to 8 minutes is wasted on every business call because of poor technology.⁴



14% of employees have heard a toilet flushing in the background of a phone call.⁴



56% of employees have heard side conversations in the background of a phone call.⁴

A classic study in human communication illustrates that when one can only hear (and not see) a person speaking, 87% of what is communicated is a result of the person's tone of voice.¹

¹DMG Research, 2017.

²Albert Merabian and Morton Wiener, "Decoding of Inconsistent Communications," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 6 (1967), 109 – 114.

³"How to Pinpoint Call-Quality Issues in Office Phone Systems," <http://hello-operator.softwareadvice.com/pinpoint-call-quality-issues-0214/>.

⁴Plantronics Global Meeting Productivity Survey, September 2015.

¹Albert Merabian and Morton Wiener, "Decoding of Inconsistent Communications," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 6 (1967), 109 – 114.

Smarter Working isn't just a theory

At Plantronics, we live and breathe the Smarter Working approach every day in our offices in cities across the world. Every office, from Hoofddorp, Koln, Madrid, Milan, Moscow, Paris, and Santa Cruz to Swindon is a living lab for product innovation. By putting into practice what we have shared, we have empowered our teams to more fully engage, enjoy their workplace, and produce great work. And we would love to do the same for your company.

PLANTRONICS HEADQUARTERS, SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA

After deploying Smarter Working principles in one of our regional offices a year ago, we've realized substantial savings regarding real estate, fewer paid conference calls, and a decrease in the number of desk phones. We've also achieved a 23% increase in employee satisfaction, based on Leesman employee surveys taken before and after deployment. We are attracting the best talent from all over the world, and are on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For® List 2016. People are engaged, focused, and energized by their work. It's simply a smarter way to work, for everyone.

To know more about Smarter Working, visit: plantronics.com/us/solutions/smarter-working

For more information on our products or services, to visit one of our offices, or to speak to one of our experts, please call 1-866-363-2583 and a member of our team will be pleased to assist.

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The Plantronics European office: Bringing Smarter Working to life.

Scorpius 171
2132 LR Hoofddorp
Netherlands

Welcome to Smarter Working. We've been expecting you.

At Plantronics, we put the principles of Smarter Working into practice every day. In fact, our European office in The Netherlands is a living lab for working smarter. Created around the concept of "beautifully human," every feature of the building responds to our employees' needs. Through innovative technology and design, we have created spaces that encourage productivity and well-being. All workspaces in the office allow our employees to collaborate, communicate effectively with clients, take a break to gather their thoughts, or focus on the task at hand without being distracted. Ultimately, people are able to perform at their best throughout the flow of their day, however they choose to work.



IDEAS FLOW FREELY

Numerous docking stations give people the freedom to move and work around the building without ever having to worry about a complex cabling system—or bothering IT. This fosters greater collaboration and innovation among employees.

"64% of employees believe that blocking out distractions increases their productivity"



MAKING IT EASIER TO SHARE AND COLLABORATE

Wireless connectivity throughout the building lets anyone connect their laptop display to one or all of our TVs in seconds.



CREATING CRYSTAL-CLEAR QUIET

Another feature of the building is the dividing wall that mirrors the surface of a crystal. This shape is very effective at deflecting sound waves, helping reduce noise dramatically.

ACCOMMODATING THE INDIVIDUAL FOR THE GROUP

Microphones in the ceiling respond to higher individual noise levels throughout the building. The system recognizes this increase in sound, and adjusts the volume by masking noise through speakers. When noise decreases, the system readjusts its output to return to normal.



WORKING BETTER WITH SMARTER LIGHTING

Floor-to-ceiling windows let the sun in, and when there's just the right amount of light, the interior lighting shuts off. As the sun goes down, the lighting inside adjusts, and slowly increases.



WORKING IN HARMONY, LITERALLY

In the shape of one side of a tuning fork, the building is, for us, a metaphor for perfect pitch. (And perfect for a company with over 50 years of deep research in acoustics.)



GETTING DISTRACTIONS OUT OF THE WAY

This carpet, made from recycled fish nets, not only absorbs sound, it incorporates a design that subconsciously guides foot traffic away from desk areas—an innovative, yet simple way to remove distractions.



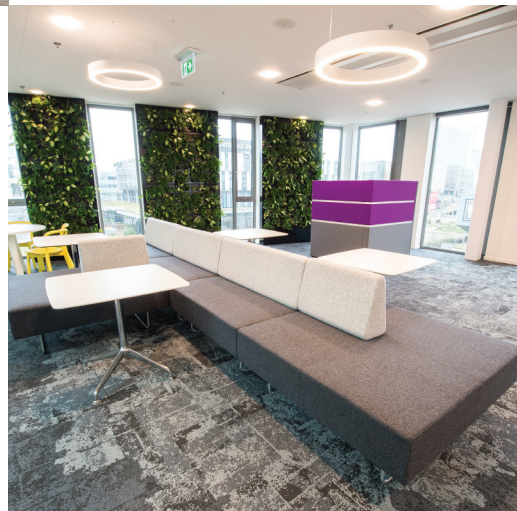
EMBRACING THE FLEXIBLE WORKDAY

The days of 9 to 5 are long gone. Someone's day can take on any shape, with the freedom to work when they want. If that day includes taking a break for a workout, our gym is always open. It's good for our health, and our culture.

"Exposure to natural light improves workplace performance."²

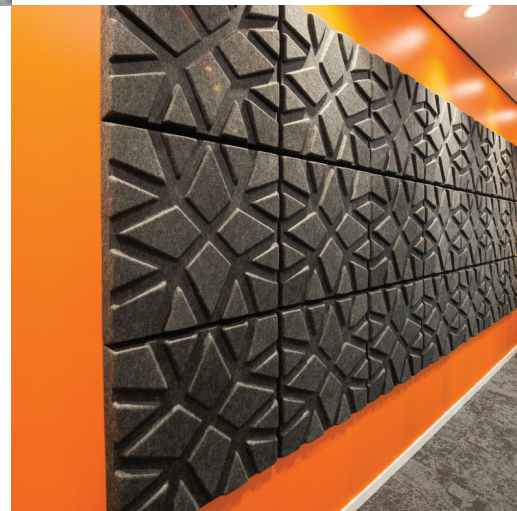
A FLEXIBLE FLOOR PLAN THAT MOVES WITH PEOPLE'S DAY

The floor plan is completely movable so team stations can be easily repositioned throughout the day. A change of scenery can be refreshing, and benefit office culture.



NO ECHOES. NO SCATTERED THINKING.

Practically every surface of the floors, ceilings, and walls is designed to dampen sound and minimize noise to enable collaboration and focus. Hard, shiny surfaces are used only when they're absolutely necessary because they tend to create echoes.



GREEN THINKING PROMOTES CLEAR THINKING

The relationship between individuals and their environment can determine how they feel and perform. This green wall is an element of biophilic design, which incorporates nature into buildings and has been shown to support well-being, creativity, and productivity.¹

¹"The global impact of biophilic design in the workplace," *Architecture Now*, February 01, 2016, <http://architecturenw.co.nz/articles/the-global-impact-of-biophilic-design-in-the-workplace/>.



SOUND TECHNOLOGY THAT WORKS AS HARD AS OUR TEAM DOES

The customer experience is more important than ever. In our customer service center, a team comprised of 27 nationalities delivers exceptional and personalized service in 10 different languages. The space itself was specifically designed to enable our team to deliver the best customer experience, while the latest technology helps them work better and smarter.



²"Exposure to Natural Light Improves Workplace Performance," *Psychology Today*, January 5, 2013, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-athletes-way/201306/exposure-natural-light-improves-workplace-performance>.

¹"When the walls come down," Oxford Economics, page 9.

The Plantronics European office in Hoofddorp is winner of the 2015 John Connell Noise Management Award for its design awarded by the Noise Abatement Society.

To know more about Plantronics or our European Office in Hoofddorp, The Netherlands, please contact +31 (0) 237440600 and we will be pleased to help.