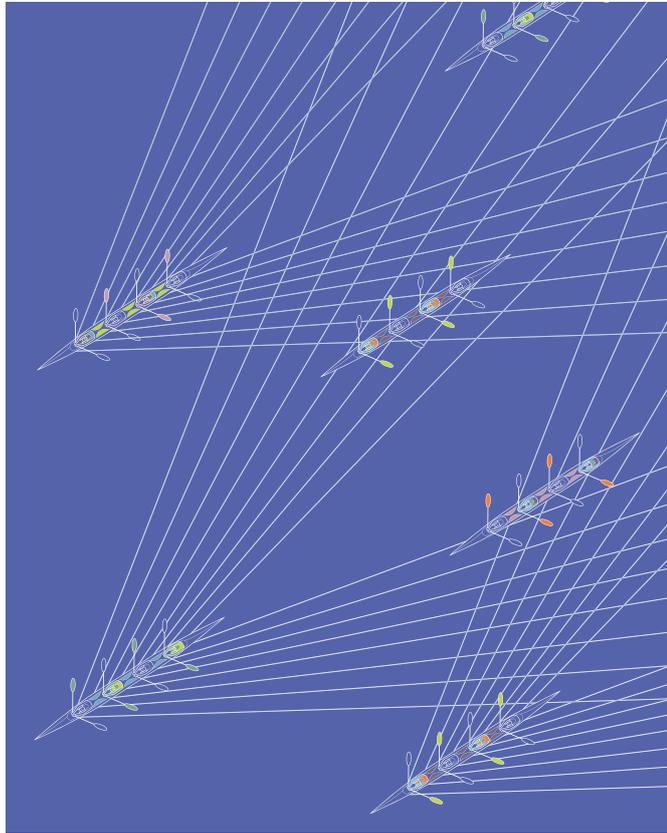




# WELLNESS TOGETHER



## BISLEY

'Wellness Together'  
Research in  
association with  
Sapio Research

## Office workers want their personal space back

Recent wellbeing research commissioned by Bisley showed that people are desperate for their own space in the workplace.

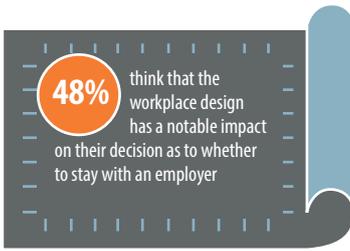
Wellness at work is a dominant theme in any discussion about the workplace. But this should not only be a discussion about happiness, it is also about creating cultures and environments that are conducive to commercial success.

The Wellness Together research project, which was commissioned by Bisley and a syndication of companies, has revealed evidence of a strong correlation between productivity, creativity and even

profitability and people feeling catered and cared for by their employers.

The study of 1000 UK-based office workers and 50 facilities management experts, which was carried out by Sapio Research, identified that in order to achieve true 'wellness' attention to every component that can impact mental and physical health needs to be considered, from building structures and company cultures through to the furniture and fittings that employees require to work efficiently and effectively.

Although there isn't a quick fix to ensuring wellness at work - it is



<b>WORKPLACE FACILITIES CITED AS MOST IMPORTANT</b>	
<b>NO. 1 53% OWN DESK</b>	
<b>NO. 5 30% OWN LOCKER OR PERSONAL STORAGE</b>	



the right combinations of many factors that will be unique to every organisation. One of the strongest and consistent themes was the clear link between personal space and wellness at work. Colleagues encroaching on personal space is the second biggest distraction in the workplace - after the office being too warm - with 34% of respondents struggling with it. Storage issues featured five times in the top 15 disruptors, with messy desks, smelly sports kit and food and stationery hunting featuring.

Employees can feel that they are having their personal space violated when they are encouraged to share all spaces. Recent research by the Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology found that the amount of personal space people need differs around the world. Here in the UK, for example, on average people like to keep a metre from a stranger, while in Argentina just 76cm is acceptable.

The workplace itself is one of the most important areas when it comes to personal space, because, as reported in *The Independent* recently, if you make someone feel as if their personal space is being invaded they'll focus on that and not the interaction they are having.

One of the best ways to address this issue is through the creative use of storage in the workplace. Giving all employees - whether permanent, mobile or nomadic - individual stowage, as well as providing plenty of functional office storage, will help them to maintain a sense of control and belonging while at work.

Here are four ways in which storage can help address the issue of personal space in the workplace to help improve wellness at work:

## 1. CREATING A SENSE OF CONTROL

With communal workspaces and nomadic working becoming the norm, having somewhere for people to keep personal things is increasingly important because it gives them a space to control and own, and therefore peace of mind.

It's not easy to create a flexible working environment that works for everyone, but making people feel quickly at home through clearly identified and individual stowage spaces helps keep employees connected and feeling part of the team. Surprisingly, however, only just over half of the respondents felt they have adequate control over their conditions.

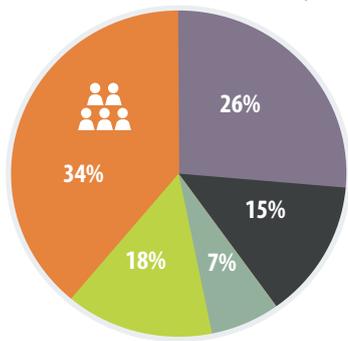
## 2. CREATING A SENSE OF 'BELONGING'

Employees still desire their own desk, but these days, with agile working practices becoming more commonplace, this is far from guaranteed. It is becoming increasingly important, therefore, for companies to create a 'sense of belonging' in the workplace, to help employees feel at home as well as being part of something.

For example, postal slots and moveable internal fittings are common customisable additions and employees can be given the freedom to personalise their locker with an identifying photo and internal accessories, using a mixture of colours and materials on locker doors is a simple and cost-effective way to reflect team zones, company culture or brand.

This need to 'feel at home' is as important to employers that work in one location as it is to those that work nomadically.

'What one thing would you change about your workplace storage?'

- My own desk 
- More personal storage within reach
- Mobile storage 
- Own secure locker or own storage space 
- A clear desk policy

According to a survey by retailer McArthurGlen, the average cost of the contents of a women's handbag is £521, so a safe place to stow items is essential.

Back in December 2015, one of the conclusions our 'Belong at Work' panel made was that nomadic workers need to be well looked after, they must know where to put their coat and bag, where to charge their phone and so on to be productive and happy. If businesses can help people feel quickly at home in an office, a sense of belonging within that organisation is likely to follow.

### 3. CREATING A SENSE OF PERSONAL SECURITY

Employees are taking more and more expensive items to work with them, such as gym kit, cycling gear

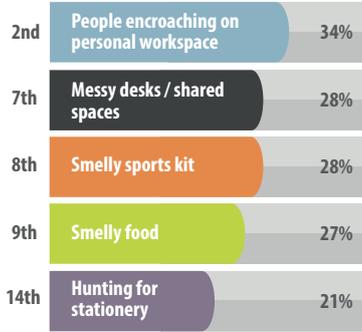
and tech, so it's unsurprising that people want to keep their stuff close by throughout the day.

According to a survey by retailer McArthurGlen, the average cost of the contents of a women's handbag is £521, so a safe place to stow items is essential. Especially if you consider the slightly alarming Home Office crime figure that states that one-third of 'theft of personal property' takes place at work. Local banks of secure lockers can help organisations achieve safe, easily accessible storage.

### 4. REDUCING DISRUPTIVE FACTORS

Clever use of storage can be a simple and cost-effective way of overcoming some disturbances. As well as providing the lockers for personal use and units for team storage, office and facilities managers should consider how and where those products are used.





Storage can be used as visual and traffic barriers between groups and departments in open plan offices. And by adding acoustic damping features to doors, noise travel can be reduced and can help to create quieter break out zones. For added flexibility, counter tops and power units can be installed on top of standing-height units for additional touch-down or meeting areas.

Concluding that workplace design affects how people feel about their work is not new. But, knowing for definite that workplace design impacts an employees decision whether to stay with a business and that just half of employees think their workplace enables them to be as productive as possible, should encourage organisations to look holistically at all the elements that contribute to making working environments 'well' places to be.

Changes don't always need to be drastic or expensive. In the case of storage it might be a simple reconfiguration, a change of ownership or injection of colour. Having somewhere to keep personal items gives employees peace of mind and a space that they can control and own, one that is just theirs.

In light of the survey results, now is the time to shift personal storage further up the workplace design agenda. Storage shouldn't be an afterthought. It may be practical and even boring, but workplaces just don't function properly without it. Paper filing is decreasing, but the demand for places to stow individual items continues to grow.

Much like personal space, storage isn't a 'nice to have', it's essential and we all need it, no matter where we are in the world.

