

RELATIONSHIP BUILDINGS® 11 key design concepts or ideas

realising RELATIONSHIP BUILDINGS®

Covid has fractured how we work, globally and at scale, making it clear that **work is something we do, not a place we go to.**

The changed priorities and lessons learned over the past eighteen months will lead to the workplace changing more dramatically now than at any point in the last twenty-five years.

Creating, and thinking in terms of, Relationship Buildings® rather than 'office buildings' is the best way for us to help our clients meet the challenges of re-engaging and re-energising their organisations post-Covid.

Relationship Buildings® reimagines our workspaces, drawing on not only the findings of our Relationship Buildings® research, but also the experience we've gained over the last decade while contributing to leading-edge work environments.

At Orangebox we've outlined The five layers of privacy for Relationship Buildings®

- 1 At ground level there are no rules.** In open-plan spaces we rely on intuition to know when to engage with others. These spaces buzz with energy and have high footfall; perfect for catching-up with colleagues.
- 2 Defined areas for collaboration.** By invitation only. Visual or physical attributes such as a raised floor, a rug or graphic signage, help to define these spaces and successfully separate them from open-plan.
- 3 Light structures start to define physical boundaries.** We often divide open spaces as it makes them feel less daunting and easier to manage. Light structures such as a curtain, an awning or acoustic baffles can help define these boundaries.
- 4 Full acoustic privacy.** We intuitively enjoy the feeling of private space to meet others. Some rooms are bookable, some not, but for full comfort, users should feel confident they can't be overlooked or overheard.
- 5 I want sanctuary.** We understand the significance of solitude for the sake of our wellbeing. In Relationship Buildings® we need remote spaces that guarantee you won't be disturbed.

When we travel through privacy levels 1-5, we increase our levels of acoustic, visual and psycho-acoustic control. When an individual walks into a Relationship Building®, the wayfinding system intuitively guides them to a work setting based on the level of privacy their task needs.

WE NEED TO STOP TALKING ABOUT OFFICE BUILDINGS AND START THINKING ABOUT

RELATIONSHIP BUILDINGS®

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The floorplan (above) showcases the 11 design ideas outlined in Realising Relationship Buildings®, its purpose is to inspire rather than prescribe.
* Soft Collaboration & Project Space are two work settings not calculated at maximum occupancy to reflect real world conditions.



1 Avenues, not Corridors

The traditional notion of the office corridor (motorways) will be transitioned into scenic routes we call Avenues. Asynchronous, chance encounters will be encouraged with the main arteries of our buildings' open-plan spaces designed to provide active walking routes, with pause moments as you encounter work areas or people of interest.

These new walkways (highlighted throughout our wayfinding narrative) are vital to pique curiosity and help turn chance encounters into the connections fundamental to rebuilding the community and culture of our organisations. The design of our diverse Smartworking® landscape of products is focused on realising this effectively.

2 Home & Away

Lights, camera, action! is at the heart of hybrid working spaces within Relationship Buildings®. Our collaborations and meetings are now achieved with team members in person, at home, in third spaces, in the car or even on a bike, which is why these spaces are called Home & Away. Integrating technology into workplace furniture of diverse scale and purpose will improve teams' connectivity and effectiveness, no matter where their members are.

The key here is to make the digitally remote feel as present as they would be if they were there in person. Being life-size on screen helps, and centred audio tech (correctly positioned) will give this set-up the balance it needs to be effective and inclusive for everyone. Within the Smartworking® product landscape there are multiple furniture configurations to achieve this.

3 Limelight

The town hall spaces within Relationship Buildings® help create community at scale. They encourage employees to both come together as part of a collective event and to simply enjoy the larger scale design of these spaces for chilling out and mixing with colleagues – those they know well, and those they may be meeting for the first time. Tech-enablement must be flexible and seamless to ensure ease of use and the ability to be both intimate and powerfully expansive.

4 Hustle-Bustle

These new, smaller scale, hyper-social spaces are designed for team encounters, collaborations, presentations, game playing, entertainment, client engagement and the active exploration of the new ideas that will sow the seeds of future success. The design of these spaces and the furniture mix within them has to offer diversity to ensure that the ways employees choose to work is not curtailed by the design set-up.

5 Pop-Up, Pop-Down (S/M/L)

These hyper-flexible meeting spaces are for learning, mentoring, presentations and project work. The scale or scope of this typology will need to offer diversity (small, medium and large) to facilitate the new needs of those gathering to use them and to help them work effectively within Relationship Buildings®.

More mobile, modular, active and scalable furniture will be essential as we aim to pop-up easily, expeditiously (and without the need for an instruction manual) in a matter of minutes, and pop-down just as easily when we're finished.

6 Island of One

This is a valuable space within Relationship Buildings®, facilitating quiet and focused individual work. Together, the design, context and positioning expresses the idea that you'd ideally like to be left alone to concentrate undisturbed, in your own island of one.

7 Team Tables

As we continue our migration away from the assigned personal desk, we gravitate to collaborative team tables and all the sensory ergonomic support these can provide. Culturally and physically more flexible than fixed workstations, team tables help move the workplace on, offering increasingly greater diversity and expanding potential.

8 Soft Collaboration

A well-understood archetype, Soft Collaboration has expanded exponentially over the last five years. Offering a more relaxed approach to the needs of the individual, it enables them to collaborate with a colleague or with small or medium teams more comfortably and effectively than the fixed workstation.

Central to the function of Soft Collaboration is its range of both personal and shared-use work surfaces, available in multiple sizes and connected to the upholstery. These are configurable within set-ups ranging from enclosed booths (where the level of hybrid connectivity is high, the spatial footprint low), focused team presentation spaces and the individual concentration spaces, and now covering everything in between.

9 Food Club

Eating together is a wholesome experience for all generations, and one that's filled with social and nutritional nourishment. (Cooking clubs can create even more valuable learning and sharing opportunities.) Breaking bread together is often when lifelong connectors are made, and for those to take place away from our Relationship Buildings® would be a missed opportunity.

Being able to socialise with work colleagues within cool environments is critical to a feeling of belonging within the workplace community. High levels of investment in kitchen spaces will be rewarding for everyone, but particularly for the under-30s, whose living arrangements may not offer them the same quality of space as that enjoyed by their more established colleagues.

10 Outside-In

In the last few years, wellness spaces and the biophilic movement have increasingly shown us the value of softer, more tranquil environments that can help restore and reset our fatigued minds and bodies. Outside-In leverages these developments, providing a much-needed balance to the hyperactivity typical of Limelight, Hustle Bustle and Pop-Up, Pop-Down type spaces. Sensory ergonomics (lights, sounds, smells, touch and taste) can all be enhanced within Outside-In spaces to create a more balanced and nuanced Smartworking® landscape.

11 New Attitudes at Altitude

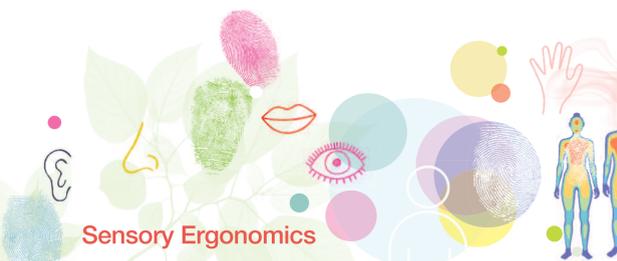
Café height working is critical to creating a more healthy mix of seating options within Relationship Buildings®. It also means that in ad hoc discussions with our colleagues we are not at a substantial disadvantage, with the physical fact of being looked down on taking away our power and making passive engagements the norm. Bar-height work levels the playing field, changing things both socially and physically. Perching at height lets you talk face-to-face, on roughly the same level.

The 4 Guiding Principles for RELATIONSHIP BUILDINGS®

Our research and insight has identified four clear considerations that help shape the Relationship Buildings® project: Culture, Technology, Wellness, and Sustainability.

- A. Don't commute to compute**
(the culture of Relationship Buildings®)
- B. Lights, camera, action!**
(the technology of hybrid working)
- C. The office is no longer the health problem, it's the wellness solution**
(the new wellness potential of Relationship Buildings®)
- D. Sustainability is a shared responsibility**
(Relationship Buildings® won't work unless we answer the needs of sustainability and climate change intelligently and together).

These four guiding principles inform the realisation of spaces within Relationship Buildings®; spaces that are brought to life with the help of our collection of inspirational work setting and furniture typologies.



Sensory Ergonomics
We need to consider all our senses when designing our workspaces. Doing so will help us innovate beyond the formal guidelines, enhancing our lives at work.

Inclusive design is a key consideration within Relationship Buildings®, and deploying multi-sensory ergonomics is critical to achieving it. Each person's sensory abilities and sensitivities change over the course of their lifetime, and by addressing multiple senses designers can support the diversity of our human needs.

Alliesthesia is a physiological phenomenon outlined in 1971 by Michel Cabanac. It posits that while as humans we want our senses to be stimulated, uniform and constant, sensory conditions aren't enough to satisfy our needs. We need that stimulation to vary and oscillate throughout the workday.

The thermal baths built by the Roman Empire featured pools with different water temperatures, providing users with different sensations from warm, hot and cold water; being in one pool at a constant temperature wouldn't have been as pleasurable or stimulating. Relationship Buildings® deploy sensory ergonomics to offer a similarly pleasing variety within the modern workplace.

Enabling individuals to override their environmental settings offers them personal control and a feeling of autonomy and enhanced comfort. And in a world where thoughtful inclusivity includes a requirement to cater for long-Covid sufferers who may be sensitive to light, noise and thermal variation, it is essential for both comfort and productivity.

Smell
Smell is most strongly linked to memory and, remarkably, is responsible for up to 75% of the emotions we generate daily (Sage). This isn't just about ground coffee, it's about nature: plants, natural airflow systems and untreated wood (cedar drawers) that evoke the natural world. While more and more spaces are being infused with artificial impressions, our suggestion is to design in and embrace a variety of natural scents within Relationship Buildings®. Lavender and jasmine, for instance, are soothing, while rosemary reduces anxiety and a sharper lemon scent can increase perceived productivity.

A. Don't commute to compute

(the culture of Relationship Buildings®)

Hybrid working has succeeded better than we'd ever expected it to, largely because we rapidly adopted (and adapted to) a wide range of new technologies – in effect travelling 10 years in 10 months. The new freedoms these technologies have enabled are going to reshape our organisational culture in the coming years.

We all now want to be more purposeful with our commute to and from our Relationship Buildings® and we also want to embrace the new social, restorative and learning mandate these spaces can provide. The days of commuting for two hours and then spending most of your time working on a fixed PC at an assigned desk are therefore over. While individual tasks remain a critical part of Relationship Buildings®, the spaces in which we perform these tasks have a new dynamic agenda and pluralism, with asynchronous meetings and chance encounters encouraged and designed for.

'Don't commute to compute' can be a defining cornerstone of an organisation's culture, offering a clear path to a healthier workplace culture that recognises the critical importance of:

- Values**
Values are a set of beliefs shaping an organisation's identity and purpose. Both individuals and organisations have values they stand for and actively pursue, and you can help to shape your organisation's values by considering one or more of the following statements:
- We're creative. We do things first by innovating and being open
 - We're competitive. We do things fast by setting clear goals
 - We're controlled. We do things right by setting up processes and standards
 - We're collaborative. We do things that last by building a community.

Rituals
Rituals are repeated practices that celebrate the shared values that bring people together. Engaging team workshops, quarterly coffee & open questions with the CEO, meal-sharing, Maori Haka dance-offs, birthday cakes, high school proms – all of these are rituals or habitual reinforcements of certain values. Meaningful rituals – from celebrating successes to providing skill enhancement and training, from bonding over food to encouraging personal projects – will help to shape the communities within Relationship Buildings®, and go a long way towards encouraging employees back to our workplaces.

Heroes
Those who embody a corporation's values and fully engage in its rituals are revered as role models – and collectively known as heroes. These individuals live the company's values and orchestrate its rituals, enacting ceremonies that engage others and help them see how values can be brought to life in the business.

B. Lights, Camera, Action!

(the technology of hybrid working)

All spaces are now VC places – except when they're designed not to be. We know that a seemingly insignificant human interaction such as asking after a colleague's loved one or sharing a topical joke is part of the glue that bonds us. Where we can't physically share these moments, Relationship Buildings® will enable them digitally.

Just as theatres, cinemas and galleries engage us more deeply by enforcing digital blackout while a performance is taking place, Relationship Buildings® will safeguard the social and mental health of our teams by providing specific work settings designed to be VC-free.

The working day is made up of hundreds of micro and macro tasks, each of which will require a user or their team to move up and down the scales of comfort settings and furniture typologies. Our Relationship Buildings® wayfinding system will lead you to the work settings you need to be productive for a given task, and is orientated around eleven key design concepts or ideas: As illustrated on the other side of this poster.

1
At ground level there are no rules.

2
Defined areas for team collaboration.

3
Light structures start to define physical boundaries.

C. The office is no longer the health problem, it's the wellness solution

(the new wellness potential of Relationship Buildings®)

With workforces globally being encouraged to come back to the workplace, while the pandemic is still visible in the rear-view mirror, achieving high levels of workplace wellness is an essential priority for all business leaders.

Openness, transparency and support will all play significant roles in the transition from home working to a new hybrid style of working, and also in addressing the many health and wellbeing challenges emerging out of the last 18 months. If spaces are to become motivational destinations, wellness needs to be at the forefront of our design thinking. And, with both brand and cultural values coming under intense scrutiny, we need to nurture and listen to colleagues now more than ever. Lockdown has made us recalibrate our attitudes and approach to our work, and the importance of managing both the varied personalities within the workplace demographic and their complex expectations shouldn't be underestimated.

The ergonomics and wellness footprint stretches well beyond dedicated or shared workstations, encompassing a new level of super-inclusive and adaptive wellness ambition for the whole building – be that a corporate HQ, a local satellite office or a new home working space. In Relationship Buildings®, different work typologies (focused, informal, collaborative, learning, agile etc) form an evolving floorplan in which how and where work can happen (with or without technology, alone or in groups, formally or informally), and these different spaces must be clearly communicated.

Personal and collective wellbeing can be broken down into the areas of physical, mental and social health, and designers and forward-thinking organisations are focusing not just on human-centred design but also on fitness-centred design. An environment full of activity, feedback and motivation will be one that produces a healthy, happy, productive, working community and enables businesses to thrive.

D. Sustainability is a shared responsibility

(Relationship Buildings® won't work unless we answer the needs of manufacturing sustainably intelligently and together)

Engaging everyone in your core environmental values is now essential. Being transparent, particularly in respect of the climate crisis, is now fundamental to both prosperity and our ability to attract and retain young talent. Everything we surround ourselves with, both as individuals and businesses, is under the CO₂ microscope – and as a significant contributor to the carbon accounting in the atmosphere, office furniture is no exception and likewise buildings with construction contributing approx. 10% of the UK's carbon emissions (demolishing 50,000 buildings in the UK creates 2/3 of all the UK's waste). Empowering everyone to make responsible choices is therefore a key value – one that can also enrich our work-life experience. Communicating why such product-based decisions are being made will help engage everybody in the process of carbon reduction, giving us all a better understanding of our shared responsibility in tackling climate change.

If we're to collectively pull our emissions back into line (as we need to), changing our attitude towards consumption, and also, perhaps, getting over our obsession with the new, is something we all need to do. Research confirms that such issues will go higher up the agenda as opportunities for this type of scalable carbon avoidance increase. It'll no longer be acceptable to simply discard seemingly out-of-date products. As a conscientious and engaged manufacturer, Orangebox will continue to scrutinise all our material selection processes, and will have an increased focus on rapidly renewable materials and recycled/recyclable materials, alongside the sourcing of high-recycled content materials, all aimed at mitigating our resource-associated carbon impacts.

Touch
Touch allows us to understand materiality, texture and aspects like weight, depth, temperature, softness/hardness. Yet – aside from a keyboard or a phone's haptics – it's a sense that's rarely stimulated within our workplaces.

In Relationship Buildings® we need to indulge the sense of touch by providing a variety of stimuli – from hard and soft floor textures to natural worktop surfaces; from stone, brick and wood features to natural foliage.

Tactility plays a vital role in the overall, multisensory comfort of our spaces, and by considering the intended behaviours of a work setting we can design an appropriate touch-comfort level for it. Airport terminal seating, for example, is often just as durable as the retail seating to be found in a shopping mall, but as it's designed for longer periods of use is far more comfortable.

It's also worth noting that if we're introducing non-rhythmic sensory stimuli (such as shimmering water features, animals and long swaying grass), these are best positioned in the peripheral zones of your field of vision.

Taste
Although you wouldn't want to taste your workplace, you do want to provide people with the nourishment and sustenance they need – and offer them easy access to it. Designing spaces that revolve around the ritual of refreshments and eating can be a helpful way to manifest fitness-centred design. Within our Relationship Buildings® we'll start to see partnerships with food and drink specialists to enhance and promote productivity and wellbeing.

Although providing refuel stations with coffee and health snacks is important, more expansive specialist services, such as morning smoothies, lunchtime sharing platters or evening culinary clubs, can expand the wellbeing potential of the workplace.

By designing evocative and stimulating acoustic experiences we will enhance the comfort of our Relationship Buildings®. Choreographing either peaceful serenity or more energetic engagement will help to determine the mood and behaviour of everyone working within these spaces.

As more of our workplace become VC spaces, our workplaces are set to experience new acoustic challenges. Headphones for individuals or centralised microphones and speakers for meetings will help the overall experience, with IT support services playing a vital role in our acoustic comfort throughout the working day.

Our post-Covid Relationship Buildings® will perhaps see work settings accommodating fewer people than we've been used to, providing us with greater comfort and personal space.

Thermal
We need to be mindful of thermal design when creating the spaces within Relationship Buildings®. Air temperature alone is not a valid or accurate indicator of thermal comfort or thermal stress, because of radiant heat from technology. And as we pursue a fitness-centred approach, we may also experience higher metabolic heat relating to our moving more frequently.

Our post-Covid Relationship Buildings® will perhaps see work settings accommodating fewer people than we've been used to, providing us with greater comfort and personal space.

Acoustic
One person's sound is another person's noise, and these subjective conclusions will change over the period of our lives. Getting the right mix of sounds within the multi-generational workplace is going to be vital.

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The five layers of privacy

5
I want sanctuary.

4
Full acoustic privacy.

