

Trend report

kitt

The office, but not as we know it: The future of the workplace

August 2021



Introduction

The office landscape has been incredibly volatile over the last year, with ever-evolving regulations and lockdowns forcing remote and hybrid changes to our work patterns. However, one thing is clear - the pandemic has dramatically altered the parameters of the office. It's changed how, when and why we work, and has brought with it the realisation that businesses 'need' the office... just not in the way they used to.

We're now left with an entirely new concept - hybrid working, an experiment that many companies are navigating. While this is driving more companies towards managed space with more flexible terms and leases, the need for office space will remain constant. However, how this is used will be completely personal to each businesses' working styles and culture, and will ultimately dictate how productive and collaborative their teams are able to be.



Lucy Minton
Cofounder and COO
Managed office platform - Kitt

Most businesses have decided they do not need desk space five days a week 9 to 5. Each business now has differing priorities and requirements about how this looks and as a result, we're seeing a migration from a one size fits all model to a focus on personalised, tailored spaces that ultimately facilitate collaboration.

This shift can only be achieved by creating an office culture that prioritises social interaction above simply workspace. Based on what we've seen at Kitt, here are some of the top trends that will continue to shape the future of work.

Trend #1:

The unstoppable rise of hive innovation

The dynamic of teamwork is undoubtedly changing – and physical workspaces need to keep pace. Post-Covid, we're seeing a surge in demand for collaborative spaces that allow people to come together, whether it's for a specific long-term project or a quick brainstorm. Rather than traditional department meetings, people want quick huddles with agile project teams who unite and break away again as needed – replicating the remote experience of dialling into a quick zoom meeting.

When designing a space, the first question we now need to ask is: How was your existing space used? And how do you want to use this moving forward?

This kind of hive innovation demands high-energy, flexible spaces that are all about coming up with ideas in the moment.

Lockdown has taught us that people can work from anywhere on pre-set tasks they understand. But when it comes to new or untested ideas, nothing can rival the buzz of face-to-face interactions. They can come into shape anywhere from window nooks to rooftop terraces or beyond – as long as they are beautifully curated with everything you might need for creative, collaborative thinking. Think of these spaces as “innovation stations”; the vessels of big ideas.

This will not only be true of dynamic scale-up businesses, but global corporations who are becoming fragmented into project teams, in search of satellite offices that function independently as their own business department. They're seeking space to house sub-teams, creating their own environment and culture, a shift away from retrofitting into corporate environments.



Trend #2:

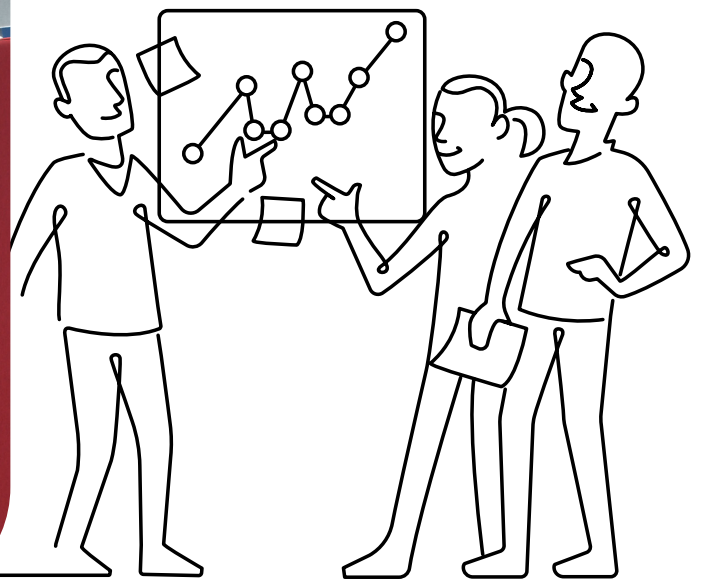
People space, not workspace

With the rise of collaboration, increased breakout areas, meeting rooms and moveable furniture come into their own. They provide spaces with a choice to shape it to the purpose of the work and people in it - and that might differ from day to day, and team to team. It's about creating an adaptable space, not fixed structures that allow for socialising and collaboration within teams.

Clients typically use just 20-30% of their offices for fixed desk space. The rest revolves around hassle-free, multipurpose areas that can be used for an all-hands meeting one minute and a client presentation, a one-to-one catch up or a happy hour the next. To allow for this absolute freedom of activity, the office needs to be maintained seamlessly

behind-the-scenes and any issues to go as unnoticed as much as possible day-to-day. From the support of our Kitt App and virtual receptionists to a friendly Space Partner, the office now only needs to be thought about in the way it is meant to - as a place for people to do their best work and collaborate, with Kitt dealing with everything else.

With so many changes happening and uncertainties ahead, this agility is key. Businesses, especially scaleups, want well-equipped smart space that can adapt to demands in the moment. Crucially, it should channel ways to bring people together in a way that feels natural, playful and energising.



“

The intention is to use our outdoor terrace area to do training, workshops, team events and social stuff and it feels like such a fun and malleable space that there are so many cool things we can do with it. I am just excited to have a play around with that and use it for all of those purposes.

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– Kitt client [Oatly](#)

“

We've got a ton of different collaboration stations and spaces – there is a lot more of an ability for people to connect and chat and work together.

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– Kitt client [Capital On Tap](#)

Trend #3:

The office as a product showcase

Today's offices are moving away from corporate functionality, instead shaping themselves around a broader set of purpose-driven values. Since it's accepted that many people will work from wherever they want to (within reason and job allowing), businesses have more freedom to make their brick-and-mortar bases into a brand showcase, complete with stylish personalisation.

Virtual conferencing service [Open Exchange](#) is one business that has used Kitt's services to explore this model, with a showcase space for clients that makes the most of the in-person experience, using their space to help them create stories for their clients.

[Oatly](#) also used their office design as a way to embed their brand into the space. Their 'milk' product translated into design spaces such as coffee shop areas to be used as break-out spaces that bring the brand to life for its employees, and any external visitors.

To get to this point, the design process at Kitt makes use of technology. Virtual Reality allows tenants to see what the space could look like based on their requirements. It's often hard for businesses to understand and visualise how the space is going to look as an empty shell but tech has allowed us to create a fully immersive viewing experience. In the future we're aiming to be able to utilise this technology to create real-time design feedback and changes - cutting the design consultation process down from around three to six months, to a single meeting.





[Open Exchange](#)'s event centre with studio, helping to create stories for their clients.



Trend #4:

Team culture and emotional ties

If the office is changing to become a brand space, it should also be a place where your employees actively want to be. Since the office is no longer a prerequisite for day-to-day work, after a year of working from home, its ability to facilitate team culture is more important than ever – particularly for younger workers.

Having a personalised space will increase engagement, with the goal of supporting team and cross-team collaboration. As a result, it will start to become a place people naturally gravitate towards for socialising. This will make it easier for team members to lay down emotional ties to a brand, with higher levels of motivation and job satisfaction.

Increasingly therefore, we're seeing team culture woven into the fabric of a physical

workspace, and that plays out on a variety of levels – from breakout areas to inspire and delight, to little, thoughtful touches. For example, Kitt client [Capital On Tap](#) put culture top of their wish list for their new Shoreditch office, resulting in a vibrant space featuring a retro games machine, beer taps, an outdoor terrace with fairy lights and even a dog corner for four-legged guests.

We also have seen a huge demand for biophilia across our client portfolio, truly reflecting an increased focus on mental health and wellbeing. The implementation of plants creates increased oxygen levels and demonstrates how employee wellbeing is at the front of mind for business leaders when they plan their office space.

It is important that offices take this one step further and provide a full end-to-end service that elevates the workspace post-design. For example, we maintain biophilia to support employee wellbeing, provide F&B offerings to build team culture and can organise everything from company headshots to fruit deliveries, making sure we're providing an ongoing, consistent service to our businesses.



“People were really excited after having months of working from home, having this light at the end of the tunnel with this new Oatly home of ours was such a huge positive force.”

– Kitt client [Oatly](#)

Trend #5:

From co-working to space partners

The coworking revolution changed the office as we know it – and now we may be evolving once again. Co-working spaces are ideal if you're a small business, because you can borrow office culture from those around them. But for a company of 20+ people with high-growth ambitions, it's very difficult to build identity and culture in space shared with other freelancers or brands.

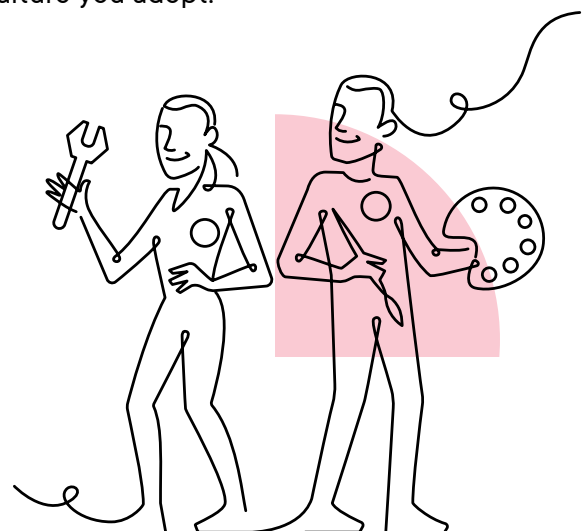
Despite providing high quality services at a large scale, co-working spaces can lack the personalisation businesses now need to engage their teams post-pandemic. As a result, we're seeing the transition from shared to private offices happening much earlier than before - businesses of 10+ people now want their own space that is tailored to the way their team works best.

Following the disruptions of the likes of Netflix in the film industry, Spotify in the music industry and Uber in the transport & food industries, the modern consumer now expects their services to be packaged up into an all-encompassing product and the office industry, despite being a late newcomer, is no different. Customers want to be able to personalise their service but do not want to be doing the hard work. This new Managed service in the office industry is enabling just that, as well as making the office leasing and management process a lot more efficient.

It speeds up a process that could take months into a matter of days - taking care of all aspects of the office so businesses can focus on their work.

For this reason, space partners like Kitt are emerging as the next-level answer for fast-growing scaleups and small businesses. By outsourcing office design and hire processes, businesses are able to tap into the advantages of a hassle-free service. All the time-consuming tasks that, in the early days, normally fall to a CEO – such as heating, internet access or rental contracts – are handled by a third party.

Kitt's end-to-end service connects tenants to landlords and allows you to work closely with your space partner - businesses can take part in all the fun parts of personalisation; helping their office become a living, breathing vision of the brand. The close relationships with the Kitt team and the ability to continue to amend layouts and management services once in the space will ensure you grow together, and they can recommend the steps needed to maintain this collaboration and culture you adopt.





Oatly 's coffee shop inspired
HQ at Link House, Farringdon

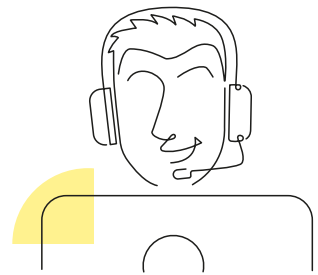


About Kitt

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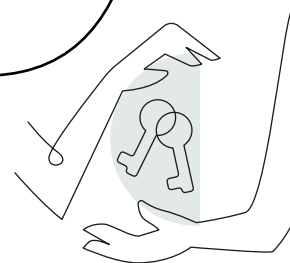
Kitt is a managed office platform providing a personalised service that makes finding and managing an office easy. Founded by Lucy Minton and Steve Coulson in 2018, the business was created to provide an end-to-end bespoke service to scale up businesses, removing hassle from finding and managing an office, using a lease structure that works for all parties involved - from tenants to landlords.

Providing support at every part of the process, from finding a space, to sorting the tea and coffee once they're in so they can focus on their business. Kitt has seen a 700% increase in revenue since last summer and recently raised \$5 million (£3.2 million) in seed fundraising, taking the total amount raised by the business to \$7.5 million. Kitt has plans to scale the business throughout London and into new markets.

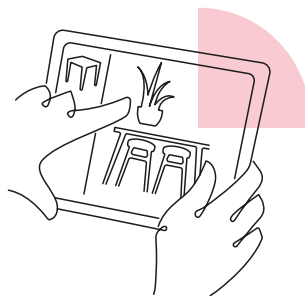


Thrive

Move-in



Design



Find



A graphic featuring a solid black circle with the word "kitt" in white lowercase letters. This circle is enclosed within a larger, irregular black outline that resembles a hand-drawn shape. A thin black line extends from the bottom of this shape across the width of the page.

kitt

Find out more at:

www.kittoffices.com