059 Open Office Spaces - ProductivityCast.mp3

📅 Thu, 07/04 10:09AM   🕐 42:45

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, space, office, productivity, environment, open, desk, productive, work, design, create, company, management, workspaces, thought, setting, terms, spot, culture, opportunity

SPEAKERS

Art Gelwicks, Voiceover Artist, Raymond Sidney-Smith, Francis Wade

---

V Voiceover Artist 00:00

Are you ready to manage your work and personal world better to live a fulfilling productive life, then you've come to the right place, productivity cast, the weekly show about all things productivity. Here, your host Ray Sydney Smith and a goose open out with Francis Wayne and our gal wicks.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 00:17

Welcome one and all to productivity cast, the weekly show about all things personal productivity, I'm recently Smith.

F Francis Wade 00:23

I'm Francis Wade.

A Art Gelwicks 00:24

And I'm Mark l wicks.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 00:26

And welcome everybody to this episode of productivity casts where we will be discussing the topic that is quite complicated in terms of management and physical layout, and so on so forth. It's the idea of open office spaces, and whether or not their productivity enablers or disable errors. And this topic came up because I came across several articles from the gentleman who started the company base camp, formerly 37 signals. And on their medium blog, they have been writing about the idea of Open Office plans, Open Office, open plan offices, and whether or not they're good or bad for staff generally. But more importantly for us here today is about productivity, how productive our employees in an open office plan environment. And there are pros and cons to both sides. And I wanted us to have a discussion about that topic today. So let's, let's kind of start off with each of our perspectives on the Open Office, space design concept, and what our various experiences have been in them.

Art Gelwicks 01:37

I have been painfully clear over the years, I am not an advocate fan or otherwise, endorser of the Open Office movement, I don't think it's a good design. I don't think it's practical. And I think the rationale used to justify it does not hold the proverbial water. That said, there are reasons why you could have colored elaborative workspaces, which is a different thing entirely. But the idea of taking your entire staff and putting it putting them basically in a giant warehouse style room, no walls, no isolation, no opportunity to to focus, no privacy, just to be completely flies in the face of how people think how people operate, and how people basically spend one third of their lives because they're spending them at work. If I

Francis Wade 02:28

saw look back at my own experience, I've never had the the pain of suffering in an open office environment. I've only really worked for extended periods in some private office environments. So I think I've been lucky, and I've escaped the bullet. Because I've seen clients in these environments suffering and just unable to get anything done because they're so distracting on all levels. And the kind of work that should be their best work comes from I'm staying at home or hiding in the hiding in the closet or staying in their car, they actively tried to escape their environment. And I'll do the best work. But I've been lucky so far.

Art Gelwicks 03:13

Yeah, open offices really lend themselves to this idea of management by walking around, which is, to me, again, drives me bonkers because anybody who's working in these environments usually winds up trying to do one of two things. They either go hijack a conference room to try and get something done. Or if they have the opportunity, they disappear to someplace else in the building, or even stay home and do the work. So this should be a screaming red flag to anybody who's setting up an implementing these kinds of spaces that you know what, this just doesn't work. This this concept of come in here, everybody I worked in, I've worked in several OpenOffice plant environments, some more open, if that makes any since then others I've been in ones where literally, there are no walls, just monitors on desks, and everybody's basically looking at everybody else that will drive you bonkers. And you think about trying to get any sort of focused work done in that environment. And the most important thing becomes, where are my headphones? Why? Because I need to create artificial focus, because they've taken away all the opportunity for me to have real focus.

Raymond Sidney-Smith   04:30

I like you, Francis, I have never thankfully had to work in an environment that was that was, you know, of the Open Office layout. That being said, Today, I spend a lot of time working on the road, where I might be in CO working spaces, or other kinds of open spaces, like a cafe, where there are a lot of things going on around me. And there are no walls for privacy and that kind of thing. So I'm probably going to take a little bit of the middle ground here today, with regard to how office design should really be thought through which I think that there's likely a hybrid, I think by my argument today with you both is going to be is there is there a middle ground where we can have open spaces that facilitate collaboration, facilitate the kind of interactivity that we want, potentially reducing costs, because let's be honest, a lot of what drove the Open Office design plan was the fact that the build out for it was so dramatically easy, in the sense that you got a Florida building, and you threw a bunch of desks and chairs in them. And for all of the people out there who make the argument that there was more space design than that, in terms of flow, and so on so forth. I'm sorry, I just don't buy it. I think that there was a there was a clear understanding that if we could not have to buy cubicle dividers, if we didn't have to build offices, there were there was going to be a huge real estate benefit to that. That is reducing the the overhead and the cost of having to do that build out and became popular for at least partially because of that. On the other side to that those I've seen several co working spaces now that have provided a mixture, open space design, with these kinds of conference rooms and other clothes space designs that give both options to people when they need to work in, in a closed setting where they need privacy. And then in an open collaborative setting when they want to work and kind of have a little bit of ambient noise around them. While they're doing that. There's also a lot of really great

technology, a friend of mine works setting an accounting firm, and or it's a consulting firm that does a lot of accounting. I'm not quite sure what that means. But the idea is behind their Open Office design is that they use technology, they use noise cancelling technology that is embedded above all of the desks. And so if I'm sitting next to you art, and then next to you, Francis, if I'm talking at my desk to you, and you're standing next to me, you can hear me, if you step about two feet outside of my desk zone, you can no longer hear me, because the acoustics are designed with the technology and you know, implemented such that there's constant noise cancelling happening around my desk and every desk in the space. It is very, very cool technology. And I can see that being potentially useful in that environment still doesn't reduce the visual distractions, and potential stress that comes with constantly seeing stimuli. But at least from a sound perspective, that's pretty cool.

Art Gelwicks   07:54

That's really cool technology. But it's also really rare technology. And it's also really expensive.

Raymond Sidney-Smith   08:01

Oh, nope, no question, no question that it's not only going to not be not proliferate among all offices. And it's primarily because of cost. And, you know, if you have a power outage, or anything like that, you know, you're you're pretty much dead in the water. Anyway, I want to discuss some of the things that if we can all agree that open office is not for everyone all of the time, what are some of the guidelines that you would prefer, in developing productivity, enabling office design, what are the good principles that we should take into account as it comes to laying out an office. So this is somewhere I've actually had the obligation and honor of having to do many times in my career, which is, we're going to open a new office. And now we need to design the office. And in multiple cases, it's been an empty brand new building, or a space that has been dilapidated to the point where now we're going to come in and in essence, take down all the walls or put up new walls or whatnot. And so we had the chance to do all the build out in a lot of the offices that I've helped to open. And I'll just, I'll just start with the fact that I, I really think about workflow of the organization, what needs to actually happen in those spaces. And always starting with the individuals who are going to be working in those spaces, not necessarily the exact person, although if you have a small company that could make sense, but more in the sense of the roles of the individuals, and what they will need to do in those space. And more and more today, we're seeing that we can really identify what it is in terms of patterns, movement, therefore flow of the office space, but also what are the actual tools that people will be using and in which spaces and therefore what needs to be

were in the office, when you come to it, not everybody's going to have the chance to do what I've been able to do, which is come to an office space and completely design it from scratch. But you can make some of these minor modifications and really improve productivity just by thinking about well, what are the roles in the company, and organization and what are people needing to do in those spaces. Specifically, I

A Art Gelwicks 10:36

see that's where I go back to the whole argument about workspaces versus collaborative spaces. Because I can't, I've worked from home office, I've worked in private offices, I've worked in cube farms, I've worked in what are called pods, where you've got four people in what is basically a giant cube, pick the combination of configurations. And it all boils down to one thing, unless the people around you are people you are working with on everything constantly, all the time. You need some division from the others around you to be able to focus, it's just the way people are. And anybody who argues against that I say do this, go into a room and take 10 radios or 10 devices and turn them all two different sounds, one being a podcast, one being music, one being a radio station, whatever, turn them all on, turn it on low, but turn them all on. Now sit there for eight hours and see if you can get anything done. Tell me that's not distracting. And that's basically the environment that's being created. So when we think about this idea of being able to have workspaces to get work done, we have to have a provisioning to say, okay, we need to have a group be able to go and work on something for X amount of time. Now, we always think about those things. It's like conference rooms, fine. Make a meeting rooms, conference rooms, whatever, that becomes a challenge of room management, which is a different problem entirely. But if you think that just by taking it down all the walls, you're creating this open collaborative environment, you're sadly mistaken. I mean, I've seen clients where they've done that, and they've said, Okay, we're going to put all our managers out in this open area. And what happens, all the managers wind up sitting in the same area. So now nobody wants to go over into that area, because it's up to their up to their eyeballs and managers. So I get frustrated when I hear people say that we can create this environment and it will foster greater productivity, and they've never worked in it, then they're kidding themselves if they think that's the case. But you're right, if we're able to create collaborative spaces, places where they can go and focus. You see this a lot with agile, you'll have Scrum tables, you'll have Scrum areas where you can go you have white boards, you have stand up meeting desk, you have displays, you can go in, you can meet, you can have your discussion, and then you can go back and get some work done. That structure works for a lot of people, it's when it gets carried to an extreme that it all falls apart,

Raymond Sidney-Smith

you make some really great points. And I I agree with you on almost all of them. And the The reality is, is that I think the the most difficult part about open office designs is that they need to match the culture. And so many people in management, especially in the C suite think that they can modify culture by modifying spaces. And that's not how it works, people will modify the way in which they use spaces, no matter how the spaces are designed. So think of it from the perspective of a well worn path. A well worn path is the path of least resistance, presumably. And it doesn't matter what the space looks like, people are going to use the pads that they're most used to using to getting from point A to point B, both from getting work, work getting work done perspective, but also what you talked about in terms of collaboration. So I'm much more like I'm much likelier to spend time with the people with whom I'm comfortable than spending time with people that I'm not comfortable. And so it doesn't matter how you lay out the office space, you're not going to inhibit me from doing that. And more importantly, if you do it to such an extent that it makes it disruptive to my by well being, I will leave the company. And that's what we see people doing in all in you know, these these types of environments, when it becomes so caustic that the environment itself becomes untenable to work in, whether that be because of a coworker who sits next to you and blasts music, or, or just has a really weird appetite for foods that are smelly and gross. I've actually, I've had I've had a client who who had to deal with something like that, where it was just this kind of constant barrage of sensory overload, and in a distasteful way, because she was around people. And she was fairly sensitive to those things not withstanding. But you know, even if she wasn't particularly sensitive, they were all just just constant, you know, like, just gross stuff. So it's just not good for people to have to go through that. I wanted to I wanted to make one quick kind of corollary here, because one of the articles that I pulled up for us to read before beforehand, before recording out, I'll put a link to this in the show notes is called library rules, how to make an open office plan work. And, and again, this is from the 37 signals, base camp, folks, Jason freed, right wrote the article, what he in essence said is that live chat rooms, real time chat rooms, like Slack, and, you know, all of these HipChat and so on so forth, are are basically open offices. And I am very much in agreement in that perspective, that what can ultimately happens is that the the loudest, and most of the most quantity, the highest quantity, speaker in slack or HipChat becomes the the rule maker by virtue of being the squeaky wheel. And the same thing happens in open office spaces, where, because there's one particular dominant person in the room, or maybe just a grouping of people, as art talked about having kind of a group of managers sitting in in a space that creates a power fluctuation, that's that's kind of an imbalance in the space. And that means poor decisions will be made, there's going to be a less productive environment overall. And it just creates problems. So I think that we have a problem both in the physical spaces that we're talking about today. But I also really want people to keep

in mind that we have that same problem in digital spaces, where this kind of digital open real time always on communication style, is really impeding our personal productivity. And therefore, team and organizational productivity also diminishes because of that.

Art Gelwicks 17:09

Now, see, this is where I will disagree with you on there. And here's why is that I think, now, I won't disagree with you totally. The digital spaces, I think, are the best alternative to dealing with these problems created by the Open Office movement. That said, part of it becomes a culture shift in getting people and and I'm dealing with this with a client right now who's doing a major deployment, Microsoft Teams is changing this mindset to what I keep calling, thinking out loud, to have those open conversations in the chat threads in the messaging to stop the one on ones and broaden it out so that people can interact and collaborate. That the culture shift that has to happen is that if you've worked in one of these open office, and often you see this structure, you see the open offices laid out. But around the perimeter are smaller offices that usually either get claimed by an individual, usually a high manager, or they have dedicated managers offices because they need to meet with people privately. Well, that's great. But all you've done is created this open bullpen type of structure, that open structure coupled with this while you need to be at your desk eight hours a day, you might as well go back to the set, you know, to the to the 19, early 1900s. And just put sewing machines out there and do piecework again, because that's what you're doing. If you're going to have this kind of an open digital structure, and allow people to interact in this virtual space, then you have to say, look, it doesn't matter where you are, it doesn't matter if you're at your open office desk, it doesn't matter if you're down in the cafeteria doesn't matter if you're home. As long as you're engaged and getting work done. And you're able to accomplish the goals and objectives set out for you. This is exactly what we want it to be. It's that classic clash of cultures that creates this great problem in this space. You're right, someone can easily dominate a virtual space as much as they can and open space. But I think that partially comes from this lack of understanding of how to operate in a virtual space, physical, it's much easier to dominate. Because you're right, somebody can have, you know, bring in last night salmon and reheat it in the microwave. And all of a sudden, they've basically taken out half of the office space. But in the virtual space, I think you can balance it more. But again, it's a cultural shift that it's a mindset shift that has to happen to allow that to occur.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 19:40

And I will I will just rebut that it's much more insidious in the open chat space, I think that if you have, if you have really good policies in terms of how workflow should happen, and how collaboration should happen in a virtual space, then and again, I'm I'm not against

all virtual spaces, I think things like Trello, and a sauna and sounds of forth are fantastic for being able to collaborate digitally. And as well as Evernote, and many other tools like that, that allow you to be able to, you know, really share without having to constantly transact asynchronous messages like email. But the, the reality is, is that in a real time chat space, you do have to have a pretty good understanding about how to be appropriate with staff so that when people are off, quote, unquote, off the clock, even if they're salaried, then they're not being felt like they're, they have to be always on and if they don't get in their thought, before the squeaky wheel gets their thought in, then poor decisions, poor decisions get made by the organization. So there's a, I think I'm in agreement with you that I think that if there's, if there's if it's appropriately addressed and properly used, it can be great. But if it if it has real problems, like someone who's, you know, suffering from a mental health issue, and not having the appropriate support from management, and otherwise, to really control the conversation, then it can really degrade all around productivity.

Art Gelwicks 21:14

I couldn't agree with you more on the aspect of establishing I almost want to say social norms within the environment space, being able to say, look, I want to gather feedback, everybody provide your feedback by such and such a date and time, and then we'll act on it from there. That's, that's an early learning curve that has to go into play with this. And you're right, most organizations don't think about that when they deploy this type of technology. They say, Hey, here's the toolset that you've got, be useful with it without thinking about how do all these pieces come into play? So definitely agree with you there?

Raymond Sidney-Smith 21:49

Yeah, I think there's something so so brilliantly simple about saying, this is an asynchronous meeting about this topic. So we're going to put time boundaries on it, we don't have to have, you know, it's great that we can have this real time chat, but we're going to talk about this topic, and everyone will have the opportunity to, to discuss this in this time period, and then there's a time boundary associated with it, it just doesn't have to happen in real time. And therefore, the first person to the gate doesn't get to, you know, really control so much of the tenor and style of the operation of that particular topic. And I've just, I've just seen it over and over again, now in various slack channels, where, you know, the, the, the person with the dominant, and most volume of messages, ends up drowning out really good ideas and steers the conversation in the wrong way. So it really does take management and appropriate policies and good culture, to be able to have a good experience with real time, especially, you know, again, our lenses, personal

productivity, I'm not particularly, you know, looking at all of the average, but certainly from a productive environment. It's important there.

F Francis Wade 23:03

Yeah, but Yeah, I was gonna just modify something you, I think you had said before about this not affecting culture, or something to that effect. But I wanted to have our listeners sort of be aware that it can't make a culture, but it can break any culture. So you can, you can make a mess of any company, any environment, any culture that you want, by putting in place the wrong policies. But you can't make a great culture, from having the right policies in place, at best, you can make it a neutral possibility, but you can ruin anyone's concentration, and therefore anyone's productivity by putting in a lot of bad things. So this sort of makes it a matter of making sure that the bad things don't happen. But anyway, I have I had the the privilege of teaching people in my one day training, that they need to be managing themselves so that they can focus and we talk about open office environments as well. The challenge is that usually, I'm not talking to the decision makers, I don't think I've ever thought talk to this. Because actually, usually, I'm talking to people who are neither in HR, nor do they have any influence. And by the end of the day, they're usually riled up at the idea of getting rid of I live the open office that they're stuck in, or the distracting nonsense that somebody has thought was a really good idea. Case in point, there's one company that I worked with, where they they put birds to fly in the auditorium will tell you what happened next. But these were wild birds, and they did what they did. But anyway, they have a problem when they go back to the office, because they either have to convince HR, or the CEO or some other sponsor, that something has to be done about the productivity related to the layout of the office. And they usually are not successful. And I put that down to a lack of training. And I think it's true in general, that even if you have all the right desks, and tables, and environment, and all the physical stuff in place, that without the proper training, at all the appropriate levels, you can still make a hash of it. So for me, I think the training comes first before even changing the physical environment. Because without it, people won't make the most of it, they'll they'll see the desk, the tables, they'll see their personal cubicle. But they won't translate that into an opportunity for hyper productivity, unless they have that frame of mind beforehand. And that's that, that that's where I would start a little bit different.

A Art Gelwicks 25:45

Yeah, I definitely agree with you the train, but I also encouraged them, I would love to see them just observe, stop looking at all these, you know, paid consultants studies about why this is so good. And just do some basic observation, like, for example, walk, they're cafeteria and look at the number of people who are sitting in their cafeteria working on

Oh, I don't know, stuff they should be doing at their desk. Why are they sitting there then at their nice desk that you've provided them? What's compelling them to find a new location? and ask them and and try and figure out, you know, is it an issue that they just, they work better if they break up the routine, they break up the structure a little bit? Or is it the fact that they just cannot get the work they need to get done at their desk.

Raymond Sidney-Smith   26:31

So I want to go through some of the things that I think people should be taking into consideration. And again, we've been kind of talking on a more macro level, but I want to give some some sort of practical thought here in terms of even if you are not the the management in your office, there are things that you should consider when it comes to the office space. We've talked about digital spaces, obviously, and figuring out how to deal with digital spaces. This one is dealing with distraction, turning off notifications, that kind of thing. But remember that there are so many other qualities of how your either company or home office should be designed. And even if you don't control all of it, you can certainly control some of it. And so think about the perspective of what's the what are the different types of working modalities that you have throughout your day? Do you need a space where you can do very high focused, you know, solo work where you need to, you know, be secluded in order to make that kind of work happen? Do you need to do Do you like to work on writing in a cafe with people moaning about you? And that kind of thing with your favorite caffeinated drink? What are the what are the different ways in which you like to work? And best work? And can you make those those environments happen in your current work spaces? And if not, how can you make minor modifications to make that happen? Consider air quality, or quality is actually a really big air quality and light quality. So it's not just the amount of lighting but the type of lighting that is being presented to you. So for example, fluorescent lighting typically has a very slow refresh rate. So that means your eyeballs are seeing lots of flashes, and the less flashing the less your eye has to adjust and therefore less strain. So air quality, obviously, you want it to be a cleaner air quality than not. And and then as we talked about noise and odors, and room temperature, for example, you might have control over some of these and not all of them. But maybe if you're always, you know really cold, and you work better, when you're warmer, you need to get maybe a space heater under your desk, if HR will allow you to have it or a sweater or something like that, or a lamp, sometimes, you know, these lines have little heater, heating bulbs, where the bulb by itself just produces enough heat to warm up your space. So think about all of those things, not all of those things, but just the ones you have control over. For example, color, color can have a lot to do with your productivity. So maybe you want to be if you feel more productive in a blue environment, maybe you put up some blue artwork, or some or change your desktop background to blue, or those kinds of things. I particularly like green because of the environment, it just

naturally calms me. And since I'm fairly anxious as a as a working as a as a personality style, I like to just have a lot of green around me, because it just helps reduce my anxiety plus the the foliage in the room helps to clean air quality. And overall, it helps me be more productive. And that's really what it's all about for me. So any any other suggestions for for folks who we're trying to make their spaces more productive within the space and environment that they have?

F **Francis Wade** 30:05
Yeah, I, I ran into study in early 90s by Tom DeMarco and Tim, this stuff. And it had to do with programmer productivity. And I offer this is a quiz in my my training where as people guess what the number one predictor of a programmers productivity was, according to this study, and I had them guess all kinds of crazy stuff. And the answer happens to be floor space, the most productive programmers had more floor space per programmer than any other in the other companies. And the floor space translated into the ability to control their environment. In other words, if you had more floor space, you're more likely to have a door and have walls you weren't in queue, you weren't in an open office environment. In other words, so having hard data like that, and showing their management that are your management that your office is becoming more about knowledge work than it is just kind of pushing widgets. And that knowledge work has a particular kind of requirement, and then do exactly what I had said, observing that I stay home. And I know people who have taken sick days that they when they're not sick, just in order to get work done. Or they come in early, or they leave late or they come in on weekends, or they come in on holidays, but any way in which they can be productive. But the point is to sort of observe what are the elements I need to be productive? Where can I find the science to back that up? Where can I show that I'm going to need more of it in the future and sort of my colleagues and then presented as a kiss to those who are in decision making capacities who are all usually in their own office and don't know what you're talking about when you're talking about that the that the offices in is unproductive. So there's a whole change management aspect this that I think most companies have to go through in order to make the shift.

A **Art Gelwicks** 32:03
I mean, you're absolutely right, Francis, there is definitely a time to work together. And then there is a time to work as an individual. And especially in the knowledge work space. You cannot work together all the time. It just doesn't work. People don't work that way. They're not wired that way. They need opportunities to peel away from the rest of the group and concentrate on what they need to get accomplished. And it's that it's that dichotomy between the terminology of focus and collaboration that seemed to create the

greatest number of problems in in this model, and then this strategy. And you're right, when you ask somebody as an executive, you know, does this work? Oh, yeah, it works great. Look, all my people are so busy. You might as well say yes, all my serfs are doing so well, they are they are tilling the ground. For me. It's that kind of mindset. It doesn't indicate that any actual work is being accomplished, anything successful is happening. There is a split in that thinking, and you have to look at the individuals and say, Okay, how do you work best? and provide them those options? I'll take this even to an extreme. There's a concept in the open office model, or movement called hoteling, we're literally You don't even have a space for yourself. All the spaces are common. You bring your machine your laptop over, you plug in, you work at a spot, when you're done, you take your stuff and you go home, you leave nothing behind. Anyone can use that spotted anytime It is truly to this the extreme of this idea. Because now from a resource management perspective, from office space, this is great. I can put twice as many people in here, if they're floating around doing meetings and things like that. If I'm thinking about the individuals, though, do you really want to live out of your backpack, because that's what that's setting up setting you up to do. You couldn't even leave a coffee mug behind. You had no identity, you get to go into a space that you have no idea who used it before you. You know, we go back to that, you know, shared space interacting with people, these are co workers. These aren't family, these aren't friends, in many cases. They're just people you interact with occasionally not having a for lack of a better term not having a home can be very jarring to people.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 34:26

Yeah, I would immediately leave that company, I would not be able to do it. And I know some companies that do do that do do hoteling, and I could never, never work there. I just really couldn't, you know, the the idea that you find me so valuable, that you could just kind of shuffle me to to fight for a spot and I'm not I I genuinely have a pet peeve about having to like even when I walk into a cafe, I don't like the whole process of quote unquote, like link, claiming my space at a at a cafe table. Like I just I don't like Eddie have that idea. I like for there to be a spot that's mine, you know, that's been pre determined. And that's the spot I will go to, and I will work there and the consistency and the stability of that makes me more productive, I go to the same cafes, and I go and sit in the same spots every time. Because that's that's the way our brains work. They like the space in which we are most comfortable being in, and we gravitate toward those. So the idea of, of that constant volatility in people's ability to get things done is is detrimental to their overall ability to actually get things done. And so we are we're coming up on time. And I want to just make one final thought in my notes here. I i I'm I had had a note here about ergonomics. And I just wanted to explain that if you have control, especially if you are an open office layout, but this really makes sense in any office environment, I would always

offer to people to think about or nomics. In terms of your line of sight to the different things you're looking at. For example, if you work predominantly on a computer screen, or some kind of display today, you should make sure that you are within a foot to a foot and a half, or I'm sorry, two feet to about two and a half feet, distance from the screen, and making sure it's the right, you know, I level for you. And making sure your keyboard is at the right height, making sure that if you sit or stand, you are doing so in a way that fits your body type and the amount of strain on your spine. And, you know, they're just like all of these various ergonomics issues, that when you do not take them into account, they can actually create long term stress on your body that can create dis ease and disease disability long term in the long term. So really start to consider how you work with your body in terms of doing what for many of us is a is a great deal of sedentary work today that our bodies were not designed to do, we weren't actually designed to just sit in one spot and click away at a keyboard. Our bodies were designed to be in movement, and on our feet for most of the day. And now we are not doing that. And that has created some some problems. And so or challenges for us. So how do we back ourselves away from that? Is it possible to get, say, a Vera desk, I'll put a link to that in the show notes. So that you can elevate your workspace to a higher spot. So you can stand for maybe part of the day, and you don't have to stand the whole day. But you know, just kind of giving yourself maybe an hour two at a time where you stand, maybe you start for five minutes, work your way up to 15 minutes, 30 minutes in the zone, so forth, giving yourself more of what would be natural for your body, you know, in the development of our, of our biomechanics of getting used to the fact that our bodies are are called comfortable standing it, it's a it's a natural state for us to be be standing. And the more you do it, the more your muscles and your various ligaments are all in the right spot and get a chance to, you know, be in a ready productive space, right, you know, kind of like the ready state, as they, as they say in martial arts. And so if you're in that ready state, you're going to be more productive, because your body's ready to take action. And that means you're going to your your brain is going to kick into gear and all that fun stuff. Any any other final thoughts, gentlemen, from the perspective of office layout, design, thoughts for managers, thoughts for people who are being managed in an open layout environment and what they might do to be more productive?

Francis Wade 38:44

Then one last thing is sort of to emphasize what what art said about run experiments. And just observe what happens is that the three sort of big bugbears that we've talked about in the I guess the last few months are email meetings and open office environments or office layout that say, and it seems that managers and executives Don't think about these things long enough, they are there, they're sick, they're scoring on goals, they're scoring against themselves, by just making thoughtless choices, as a company I'm aware of which

just recently built this huge, beautiful 10 story building. And I've been training some of the people who who moved into that building, and they never actually brought in anyone to consider and talk about the office environment, it was just treated as if it were either a given or just a matter of law, or luck of the draw. But there's these ways in which companies if they could reflect in the way they are described, could stop scoring on goals.

A Art Gelwicks 39:49

When you look at the strategies that are put into place, typically, decisions get made at almost a company level, they decided we're going to move to this open office environment. And they don't consider that different groups work in different ways. If they want to be successful doing this kind of stuff, there are times that open office works, there are times that collaborative spaces works, there are times that private spaces work if you provide all of those options. And then as management say, work in the areas that work best for what you're trying to do, then, and give them the latitude to do that. You're going to want to empower your people, which is what every manager says they want to be able to do to you're going to give people control over their environment, they're going to feel like they they are actually valued and engaged in the process. But three, you're going to find out what works for what groups. I mean, if you've got a call center, you have to have people sitting in certain spots and handling certain things. And you have to build an environment that works for that call center. If you've got a bunch of software developers, a call center model doesn't work.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 40:52

Even though you may think that, hey, we bought this stuff in bulk and everything can look uniform, it can be pretty for when we do tours, you're not thinking about the type of work work that has to be accomplished and the people who are doing it. Fantastic. Fantastic. Thank you, gentlemen. And so this is bringing us to the close of this conversation for productivity cast about open office spaces. If you have a question or comment about this topic or something we discussed, feel free to head over to the podcast website. If you're not there. And we invite you to go into the comment section, leave a comment, ask a question, feel free to let us know your thoughts there at the bottom of the page will be glad to respond if you want us to respond. Also there at productivity cast. NET on the episode page, you'll find our show notes. And those include links to anything that we discussed. So like the articles and the Vera desk, and so and so forth, that we discussed our link there in the show notes. We have a transcript so we have the transcripts for our conversations are there and you can learn how to follow us on the website in your various and favorite podcast apps, and so and so forth. If you have another question that is not about today about personal opinion activity, feel free to head over to productivity

cast.net forward slash contact there on the contact page, we have the ability for you to leave a typewritten message that will send to us or you can actually record a voice message through the little web browser widget and it will send us a voice message. So thanks to Francis and art for joining me here on this episode of productivity cast. That brings us to the close of the episode. Thank you for listening to productivity cast, the weekly show about all things personal productivity, I'm recently Smith take care and here's your productive life. Thanks everybody.

V   Voiceover Artist   42:34

That's it for this productivity cast. The weekly show about all things productivity with your hosts, Ray Sidney Smith and a goose open out with Francis Wade and art gallery