



ZWISCHEN
DEN WELTEN



Volume 9

Mark N. Phillips

Collisions

Room for Creativity and Innovation in the Office

Editors: Jürgen Krahl / Josef Löffl



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Zwischen den Welten

Band 9





Collisions Room for Creativity and Innovation in the Office

Mark Phillips
Hochschule Coburg





Collisions

Room for Creativity and Innovation in the Office

Prof. Mark N. Phillips
Coburg University of Applied Sciences
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Mock Up
Seating in the corridor for
short interactions

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Foreword by the Editors

Many a time an intensified look at (seemingly) well-known surroundings is enough to give an impulse for a new approach. “Zwischen den Welten” personifies the self-conception of a contemporary research platform which provides room for ideas and approaches based on the entire spectrum of academic disciplines. In many respects, it is precisely these interspaces between the specialised professions which offer suggestions for innovation. By and large, these interspaces are all too often ignored when examining the whole situation. The author of this volume focuses our attention on those aspects in which the basic framework acts as a setting for our daily professional life. Due to his combination of creative intuition and knowledge from neurological research as well as his experience with creative room concepts, Mark Phillips opens up a new world, which everyone can experience – as long as we have the courage to follow the directive concepts described in this publication.

Jürgen Krahl and Josef Löffl





Foreword

During my research, I stumbled across an article by Ben Waber, Jennifer Magnolfi and Greg Lindsay on the topic of workplace design. They use the term “collisions” to describe random encounters of company employees. In a working world which is becoming more and more digital, interaction among employees is increasingly awarded more meaning and value. Collision is an appropriate term because it contains both the sense of informality and spontaneity. However, is it possible to predict and verify the effects of processes in companies and those in such collisions? Could it be possible that they even stimulate innovation and promote creative work in companies?

A lot has been said about creative work. It is supposed to be the future, the future of many employees and many companies. New developments are unthinkable without creative work. Avoiding changes to processes in the office environment implies no new developments and innovations. But what is creative work? Bringing a little clarity into the picture will do no harm. On the one hand, we need clarity on the term “creativity” and what contribution we can make to creativity when we are at work. For this, I have collected and evaluated some of the research in this field. On the other hand, we need clarity on the question of work, office work. Where does work take place, what is it and in what way will it probably change in the future.

Considered together, creativity and office work could provide us with information about the requirements needed in a designed office environment in order for creative work to be able to take place there. This can happen when the right conclusions are drawn from observations on the conditions needed for the emergence of creativity. These conclusions can then be applied to spaces that are already available in offices or are in the process of being planned or still need to be found.

Using a sound basis, it is our goal to develop a causal relationship between the conditions for creativity and the environment in the office. The pre-requisite for creative work is a space that is so organised that it provides support for creativity. Our aim is to design such a space.

Prof. Mark N. Phillips



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of applied sciences and arts



Mark Phillips

Photo: Coburg University



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Summary

Topics such as change management, flexible office, home office, etc., play an increasing role in office planning and office design. Such topics are of direct significance for the employees as users of these office spaces. In this project, we investigated the insights from creativity research on the relationship between body and mind as well as human behaviour which have been developed from psychology and neurosciences to see how they could be used in the design of space in the office environment. Ultimately, it begs the question as to whether and how changes in the self-conception of companies are reflected in the built office environment. For a company that really takes the needs of its employees seriously will continue to operate in a future where there will only be an even smaller number of skilled workers available, where their increased consciousness about their individual needs continues to function and where they still generate innovation.

Creativity and also innovation are viewed as a reflection of the environment. The term “creativity” is frequently used in the arts and, especially nowadays, sometimes in the development of computer hardware and software. In the arts, such a reflection does not usually take place from a sociological or economic point of view. In many cases, however, ‘innovation’ and the area of innovation management are associated with technology or economic sciences. Innovations are deemed to be a pre-requisite so that they can be deployed in an economic way by businesses.

For this reason, interfaces between an economically determined environment and the arts are required for the development of concepts about creativity and innovation. It is especially here that the question arises concerning sociological innovation for society. These interfaces are ideally represented by architecture in its original tradition and design in its modern definition. In our view then innovation management is a core competence in the methodological principles of architecture and design. Office planning is economically a significant part of architecture and design and is located within the realm of interior architecture. Our current understanding of interior architecture is that it involves an interdisciplinary approach in which related areas such as psychology, philosophy, behavioural science, brain research or health management serve as the basis for solid enhancement and new insights. It is especially in the interaction of these disciplines that it is possible for a humanistic and user oriented approach to occur which should be of benefit to mankind. Only through scientifically validated knowledge about the needs of human beings is it possible for the environment to be planned and equipped according to these needs.