HARMONY OF THE HUSTLE

Productive Space, Human Experience, and the Balance between partitioned and opened environment.

In the workplace, history has had a peculiar instance of repeating itself, reflecting shifting ideologies of how offices should be organized. This research investigation explores the impact of workspaces on productivity and human well-being through various methods of partitioning space. Studies conducted by Gensler, one of the largest architecture firms in the world, and Oxford Economics show evidence that there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all solution to organizing a workspace and that workspace design has a direct effect on an employee's morale and ability to work diligently. The research included investigation into historical precedents including an US Copyright Office in Washington DC, an Intel Campus in Hong Kong, and a new and controversial Apple Campus in Silicon Valley, change over time, and varied configurations for partitioning productive spaces. After the investigation was pursued, spatial application was concluded to strike a balance between partitioned and coworking spaces.

Timeline

1964
- Minimal partitions
- Heirarchy, reflective of status
- Work generally followed a a linear process

Robert Propst of Herman Miller Furniture designs the prototype of the "Action Office", the beginnings of the commonly known office cubicle.

1968
- Professional and refined
- Open v. Closed work environments up for debate
- Work is less linear and networked

The more economical Action Office 2 is developed and released a few years later.

1980s
- Economical, flexible, and impermanent
- Less heirarchy, more equal
- More emphasis on technology

Leeching off the success of Herman Miller, other furniture companies imitate this idea of partitioned work spaces.

TODAY
- Collaboration is key
- Work is centered around technology.
- No heirarchy but also no permanence

After extensive studies, many leading tech companies push for open-plan work spaces under the belief it will increase creativity and morale in their employees.
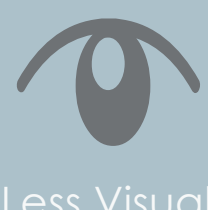

ISOLATION

Floor Plan 1/16" = 1'

Intel Corporation Offices, Hong Kong - 2016
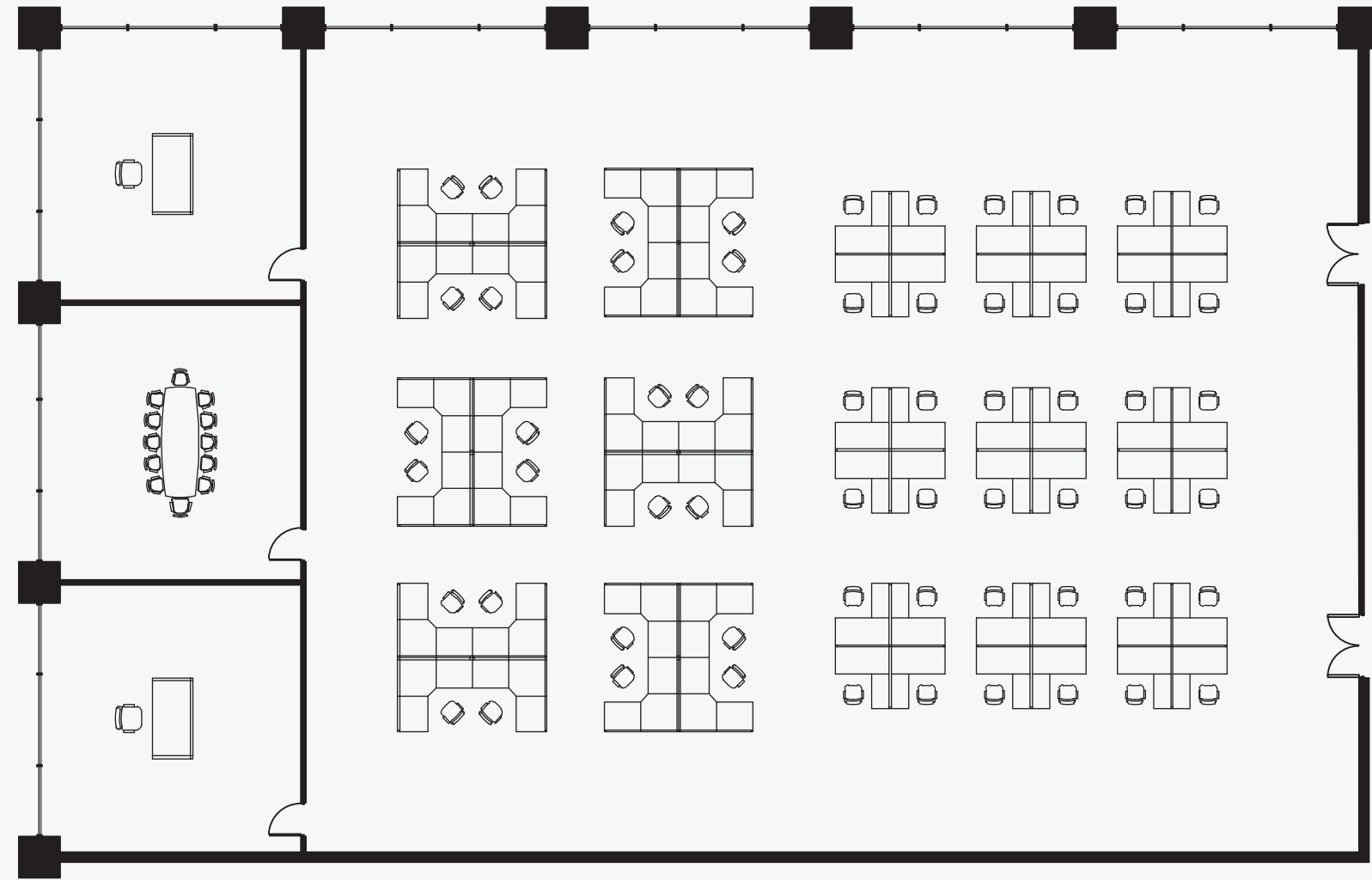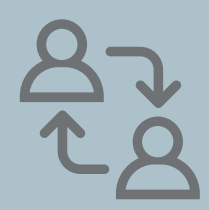
POSITIVE
- Privacy
- Increased Productivity
- Less Visual Distractions
- Sense of Place

NEGATIVE
- Discouraged Collaboration
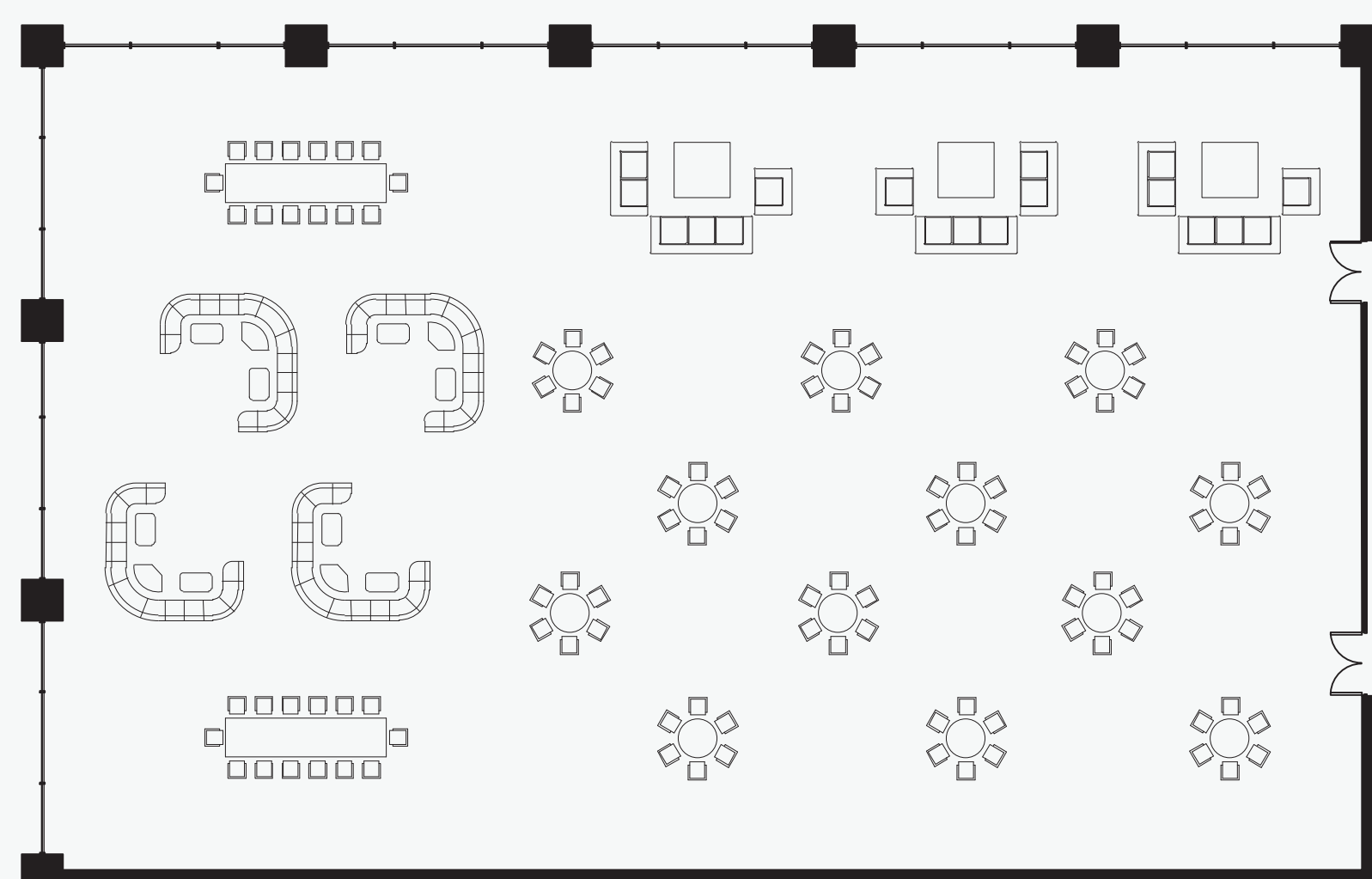- Isolation
- Reduced Quality Control

"Designed to liberate the office worker from the privacy-less open office"
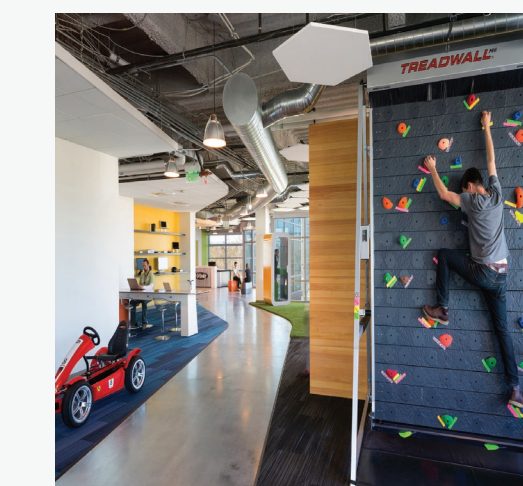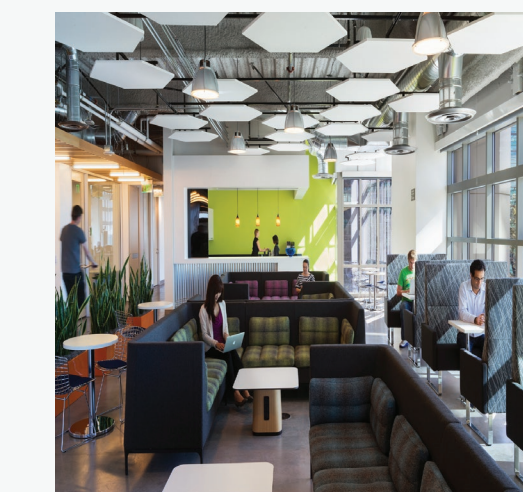
- Nikil Saval, *Cubed: A Secret History of the Workplace*

ANXIETY

Floor Plan 1/16" = 1'

"After nine years as a senior writer, I was forced to trade in my private office for a seat at a long, shared table. It felt like my boss had ripped off my clothes and left me standing in my skivvies."

- Lindsey Kaufman, Washington Post

GoDaddy.com Offices, Silicon Valley, California - 2017

BALANCE

Floor Plan 1/16" = 1'

U.S. Copyright Office, ca. 1920

Law Office, ca. 1930

CYLCE OF PHILOSOPHY
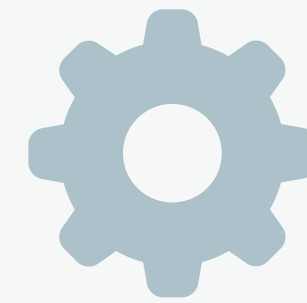
Pre-Partition → Partitioned → Post Partition

REALITY AGAINST PERCEPTION

Throughout the world, leading tech companies have been making the case for "empowering" open work spaces to replace the "oppressive" nature of office cubicles, however research shows that partitionless work spaces may not be the end-all solution.
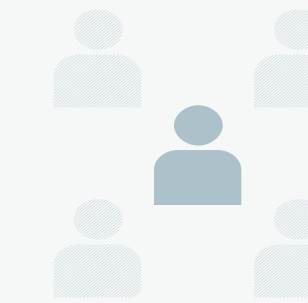
KEY FINDINGS:

- Workers want to work - focus is top priority
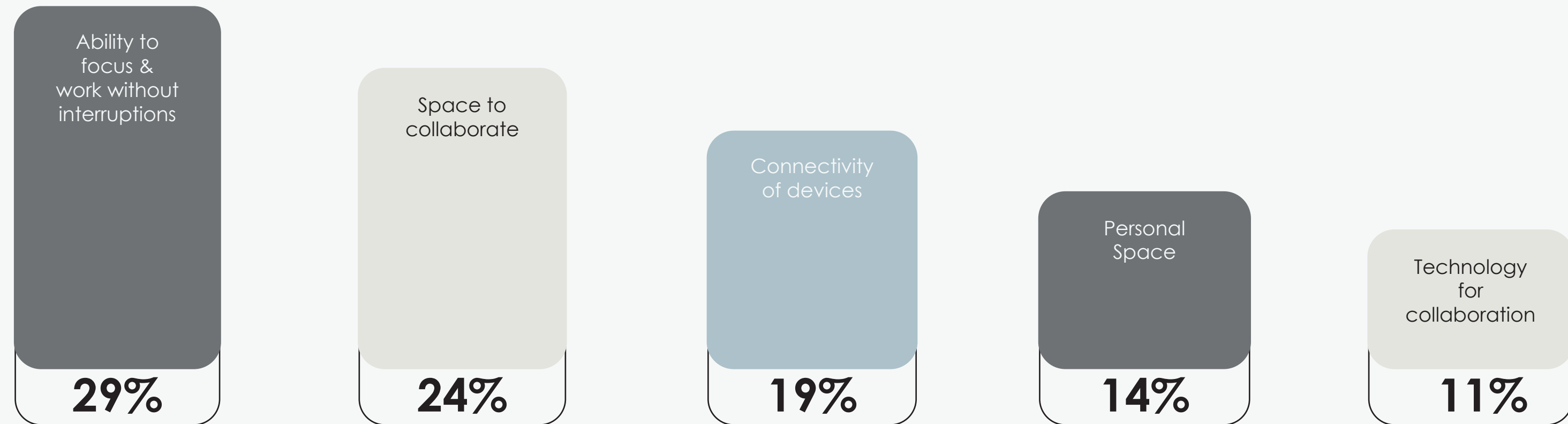- Constant connectivity leads to burnout and compulsiveness
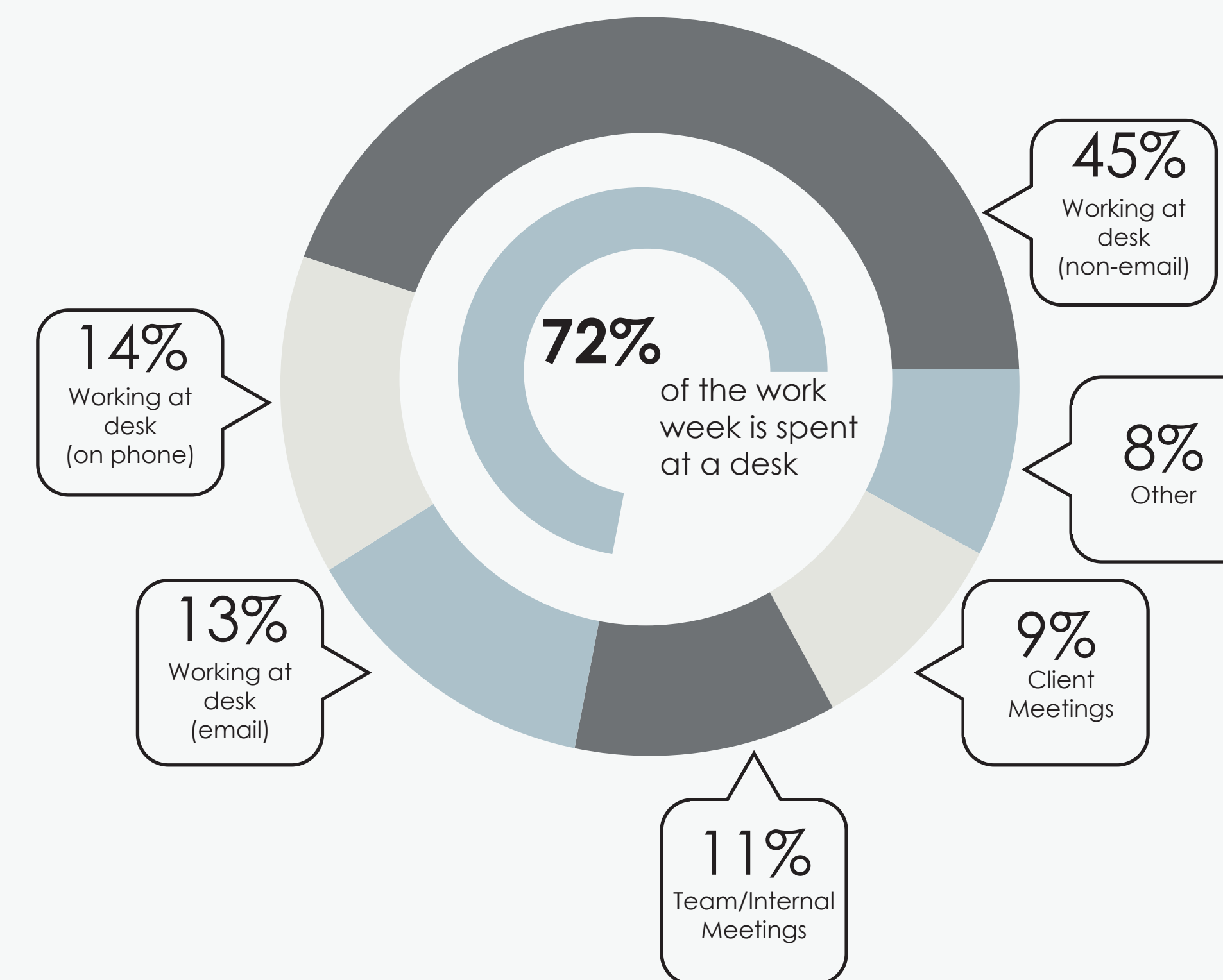- Bosses are out of touch with their employees
- Workplace design has a direct effect on productivity

MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS IN WORK ENVIRONMENT

Ability to focus & work without interruptions	Space to collaborate	Connectivity of devices	Personal Space	Technology for collaboration
29%	24%	19%	14%	11%

HOW WORKERS MANAGE THEIR TIME - WEEKLY

72% of the work week is spent at a desk

- 45% Working at desk (non-email)
- 8% Other
- 9% Client Meetings
- 11% Team/Internal Meetings
- 13% Working at desk (email)
- 14% Working at desk (on phone)

PARTITIONED V. OPEN

- Workers tend to have less exposure to views or natural light
- Partitons block each worker from visual distractions around the office
- Each employee has their own peronal desk and can make it their own
- Sound absorbing panels reduce auditory distractions and allow more focus on work.

- Workers tend to have more exposure to views or natrual light
- The lack of partitions allows for rampant visual and auditory distractions
- Because there are no assigned desks, people must choose where to do their work
- Although collaboration is made easier, productivity may be hindered by constant connectivity

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