HAPPINESS IN THE WORKPLACE STUDY — NEWSWORTHY ANALYSIS
The right workspace may transform employee disposition and job performance.

As employed Americans today spend so much time in their place of work, it is not surprising that the very layout or design of their environment can have a major effect on them. A new survey* by National Business Furniture, conducted by Kelton Global, shows that the happiness levels of employed Americans in the workplace are influenced by their physical surroundings. A majority of workers claim that when their working space is not up to par with their expectations their mental well-being can suffer.

Workers are so influenced by their environments that their work productivity also takes a nosedive. In fact, many admit that their workspace can impact their motivation levels, how stressed or anxious they are, their productivity and the quality of their work. This is likely something employers should make note of as Millennials, more than any other generation, claim their workspace impacts their happiness, business performance and general well-being.

* a survey of 560 Americans ages 18+ Who Are Employed Full or Part Time
KEY STORYLINES
This study uncovered 4 key storylines.

1. The physical workplace affects the mental workspace.

2. Workers demand an office space that keeps them pleased.

3. Workspace design can affect mood, performance and well-being.

4. The happiness of Millennials at work is closely tied to the design and layout of their workspaces.

The physical workplace affects the mental workspace.

As working Americans spend 40+ hours a week on the job, it is important to understand how their physical workspace affects them. Nearly all employed Americans claim that elements of their workspace can have a negative influence on their mental wellbeing, their happiness and even their job performance.
Physical discomfort can also be a driver of discontentment in the workplace.

In fact, more than one in two (54%) of employed Americans who say there’s at least one thing in their physical workspace that would cause them to be unhappy, believe an uncomfortable work area — such as a chair or workstation — would be the reason for their displeasure. Seventeen percent would even say the same about not having flexible desk options, such as a stand-up desk.

Which of the following, if any, would make you UNHAPPY with your physical workspace, even if just a little bit?

- 62% Having a cluttered work area
- 61% Having to use outdated technology
- 54% An uncomfortable workspace, such as a chair or workstation
- 43% Not having a private space to work
- 25% Not having a separate area I could go work in to get away from my usual workspace
- 17% Not having flexible desk options, such as a stand-up desk
- 12% Not having an open floor plan
- 9% Having a private office removed from my colleagues

Employed women are more likely than their male counterparts (60% vs 49%) to say an uncomfortable working environment would cause them to be unhappy.
Privacy and flexibility can directly impact pleasure levels in the workplace.

Others go so far as to say that not having a private space to work (43%) or having a private office removed from their colleagues (9%) would make them unhappy with their workspace. Similarly, not having more flexible options such as a separate area to go work in to get away from their normal workspace (25%) or not working in an environment with an open floor plan (12%) would lead to their sense of misery.

* Among those who would be upset with something in their workspace
Workers demand an office space that keeps them pleased.

Given that there are so many factors about their physical workspace that would make employees unhappy at work, it's imperative that employers do what they can to create an environment that keeps their talent happy and engaged. In many cases, there are simple solutions employers can provide to generate pleasure amongst employees.

Access to the type of workstation they desire is key to keeping employees happy.

Nearly half (48%) of employed Americans admit the type of desk chair they have - such as one that offers benefits like mobility (on wheels) or health (ergonomic design) - is critical in keeping them content at work. More than one in five (21%) say the same about the type of desk they are provided, such as a stand-up or treadmill desk.

Which of the following would be important in keeping you happy at work?
Others admit their level of work bliss is tied to their access to privacy.

Close to two in five (35%) admit that having a privacy screen or wall around their workspace would be an important aspect in keeping them happy at work.

More working men than women say that having access to soundproofed meeting rooms to keep their chats under wraps would keep them happy at work (26% vs. 19%).

Similarly, others say the same about having access to a personal locker or storage unit for their belongings (28%) and meeting rooms that are soundproofed so their conversations can be kept private (23%).

And for others, their access to technology is critical in keeping them satisfied.

Close to one third (32%) say having multiple computer monitors to work from on their desks is key to maintaining their glee at work. Still others (23%) say the same about having an adjustable computer stand.

Which of the following would be important in keeping you happy at work?

- Meeting rooms that are soundproofed so that my conversations can’t be heard.

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<th>Employed Males</th>
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<td>26%</td>
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Workspace design can affect mood, performance and well-being.

When employees are at work, chances are they are spending the majority of their day at their personal workspace. Therefore, it's important for employers to recognize that the overall design of their surroundings can impact not just employee happiness and well-being, but their ability to be productive, deliver quality work and feel motivated to work hard.
Overall workspace design impacts mental and physical well-being...

Close to half (48%) of employed Americans say their happiness at work is directly tied to the layout of their workstation. In fact, many also say the same about the impact their workspace layout has on their stress and anxiety levels (42%) and physical wellbeing (37%), too.

Employed women are more likely than men (47% vs. 38%) to admit their workstation impacts their levels of stress and anxiety.

...and productivity and quality of work.

Nearly one in two (47%) feel their workspace influences their level of productivity while 42 percent say the same about the quality of their work.
The layout of their workspace also influences their job performance.

Many working Americans admit that their ability to focus for long stretches of time (41%), their overall motivation to work hard (36%) and their willingness to work longer hours (30%) are all impacted by the design of their personal work area.

Employed women are more likely than men (48% vs. 35%) to say their ability to concentrate for a long period of time is impacted by the overall design of their workspace.
The happiness of Millennials at work is closely tied to the design and layout of their workspaces.

Employed Millennials, more than any other working generation, are likely to admit that their happiness — and unhappiness —at work is impacted by their physical surroundings. Everything from their connectivity to colleagues, their productivity and their performance on the job all hinge on the overall design and layout of their workspace.

Working Millennials admit a variety of spaces to work from impacts their happiness.

Employed Millennials are more likely than their cohorts from older generations (30% vs. 21 %) to say having a breakout space to get away from their usual work area would drive their bliss at work.

They have a higher threshold for joy regarding office layout.

Among those who say there’s at least one thing at work that would make them unhappy, working Millennials are more likely than their older counterparts (18% vs. 7%) to say not having an open floor plan would be a reason for their displeasure. Similarly, they’d also be more likely than older generations (11% vs. 6%) to admit having a private office removed from their colleagues would make them unhappy.

Which of the following, if any, would make you UNHAPPY with your physical workspace, even if just a little bit?

- Having a cluttered work area: Millennials 64%, Gen X & Boomers 59%
- Having to use outdated technology: Millennials 64%, Gen X & Boomers 59%
- An uncomfortable workspace, such as a chair or work station: Millennials 50%, Gen X & Boomers 58%
- Not having a private space to work: Millennials 43%, Gen X & Boomers 44%
- Not having a separate area I could go work in to get away from my usual workspace: Millennials 30%, Gen X & Boomers 21%
- Not having flexible desk options, such as a stand-up desk: Millennials 21%, Gen X & Boomers 14%
- Not having an open floor plan: Millennials 18%, Gen X & Boomers 7%
- Having a private office removed from my colleagues: Millennials 11%, Gen X & Boomers 6%
Millennial satisfaction focuses on connectivity in the office.

Working Millennials seek out a sense of community within the office. In fact, nearly three in ten (27%) say the placement of boards for shared use - like whiteboards, corkboards or glass boards - would be key in keeping them happy at work, compared to far fewer of their older counterparts (11%) who say the same.

While they value a community of collaboration, many Millennials still place emphasis on privacy.

Employed Millennials are more likely than their older counterparts to say that having privacy screens or walls around their workspace (40% vs. 30%), and sound-proofed meeting rooms (27% vs. 19%) would be essential in keeping them happy at work.
Workplace design influences happiness and well-being...

Millennials who work are more likely than their older counterparts to admit that the overall layout of their workspace impacts their happiness at work (56% vs. 42%) and stress and anxiety levels (46% vs. 38%).

...and what employees bring to their job.

Employed Millennials are more likely than their older counterparts to say that the design of their personal workspace influences their overall motivation to work hard (43% vs. 29%) and their willingness to work longer hours (38% vs. 24%). They’re also more likely to say it affects their ability to be productive at work (54% vs. 42%) and create a quality work product (47% vs. 39%).

Which of the following, if any, are impacted by the overall design of your personal workspace?

- My happiness at work
- My productivity level
- My stress and anxiety levels
- My quality of work
- My ability to concentrate or focus for long stretches of time
- My physical well-being
- My overall motivation to work hard
- My willingness to work longer hours
- My ability to feel connected to my colleagues

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<th>Feature</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
<th>Gen X &amp; Boomers</th>
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<tr>
<td>My happiness at work</td>
<td>56%</td>
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<td>My ability to feel connected to my colleagues</td>
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NEWSWORTHY HIGHLIGHTS
There’s plenty that could derail happiness at work. More than nine out of 10 (92%) working Americans confess that there is at least one aspect of their physical workspace that would make them unhappy. For nearly two-thirds (62%) of them, a cluttered work area would drive feelings of discontentment.

In today’s digital age, archaic technology can be detrimental to workplace joy. About three in five (61%) working Americans who say something about their physical workspace would lead to discontent point their finger at outdated technology.

Access to the type of workstation they desire is key to keeping employees happy. Nearly half (48%) of employed Americans admit the type of desk chair they have — such as one that offers benefits like mobility (on wheels) or health (ergonomic design) — is critical in keeping them content at work. Nearly a quarter (21%) say the same about the type of desk they are provided, such as a stand-up or treadmill desk.

Overall workspace design impacts mental and physical well-being. Close to half (48%) of employed Americans say their happiness at work is directly tied to the layout of their workstation. In fact, many also say the same about the impact their workspace layout has on their stress and anxiety levels (42%) and physical well-being (37%) too.

The layout of their workspace also influences job performance. Many employed Americans admit that their ability to focus for long stretches of time (41%), their overall motivation to work hard (36%) and their willingness to work longer hours (30%) are all impacted by the design of their personal work area.