



# THE STYLE OF COWORKING

Contemporary Shared Work Spaces



Alice Davies & Kathryn Tollervey





## Introduction

In recent years, the important role that the physical working environment plays in allowing for greater creativity and effectiveness has started to be recognised. Nowhere is this more evident than through an emerging alternative work style called coworking, which is set to have a profound effect on what we consider a workplace to be.

Coworking spaces are shared workplaces that bring together diverse groups of individuals and startup companies. The social interaction that happens in these spaces is key to their rise in popularity and the working style that surrounds them. They are made up of people who could potentially work in isolation, in a home office or café, but who understand the huge value and power of collaboration: from chance encounters, conversations over coffee, eating lunch together or being connected through events organised within the spaces or by the hosts of their chosen space.

Coworking interiors are typically informal and have the feel of a café or home environment, where individuals or small companies can benefit from social interaction within inspiring surroundings. These spaces are not just designed for their users to have a desk for their laptop, but also provide arenas in which artists, photographers, fashion labels and designers can practise their crafts. They often have a variety of different spatial configurations for events, workshops and talks, all within open areas where collaboration is encouraged.

Typically, users rent coworking spaces through a monthly membership or through a 'pay-as-you-go' model. There are many motivations for the existence of coworking spaces, from individuals who take on a lease for a space and rent it to friends, to entrepreneurs who see a profitable industry emerging. Big businesses are also getting involved in a variety of ways, from investors basing themselves in coworking centres to Google Campus (featured in this book), which puts a different spin on what coworking is about and who it is for.

As work becomes multilayered and the goal of achieving work-life balance is ever-present, employees will seek to have choices and attempt to work in flexible

ways. This will require a rich mix of workplace options that includes your local or preferred coworking centre, as well as your company's office, the coffee shop or your home office. Companies and freelancers will also benefit from utilising the economic flexibility that coworking centres provide, by allowing a type of elasticity that traditional long-term leases do not offer.

Like any culture rising from the underground, coworking comes with its own unique aesthetic and form of expression. In the same way that street style influences high fashion, trends within coworking will come to influence larger corporations and mainstream office workers.

This book aims to inspire those interested in this exciting and fascinating new take on the workplace by showcasing 30 of the hottest coworking spaces from around the world. There is no unified style and look of coworking, and these spaces have been selected to show the diverse range of interpretations that are possible and the inspiring interiors within them. It may even change the way you think about your own workplace and how you work.

Alice Davies & Kathryn Tollervey

# SND CYN



Our building is 125 years old. It was originally a lima bean and grain processing warehouse and had been well preserved, with most of the original woodwork and interior structures intact. The fact that it is a historical building definitely influenced the design. It gave us a great starting point. There was so much character to begin with; our challenge was to balance it with some modern elements. The end result is a heady mix of vintage industrial elements and mid-century modern style.

Every item has been chosen very carefully and has its own story. We call our conference room 'The Champ', and there are some really great pieces in there, such as our vintage Eames rocker chair with a leather bikini. I looked all over for that exact design and finally found it in Europe. The coffee table is a vintage piece from a biscuit factory on the East Coast. The hanging lights are a bespoke design that I had made for the space. They're draped around the beams and boards and accentuate the ceiling beautifully.

I love the ball made of railway spikes welded together. The train tracks run behind our office and we found the old spikes in our backyard. Then a friend welded them together. It's truly one of a kind. I found the black vintage pendant lights on a British website and had them sent over. They come from a factory in the Czech Republic.

I wanted to surround myself with work by designers and creatives whom I admire; we have some iconic pieces of designer furniture. I made some of the art myself and

some of it was made by other designers. I have an incredible signed Bob Dylan print by Milton Glaser, as well as record covers designed by Saul Bass and framed book covers by Paul Rand.

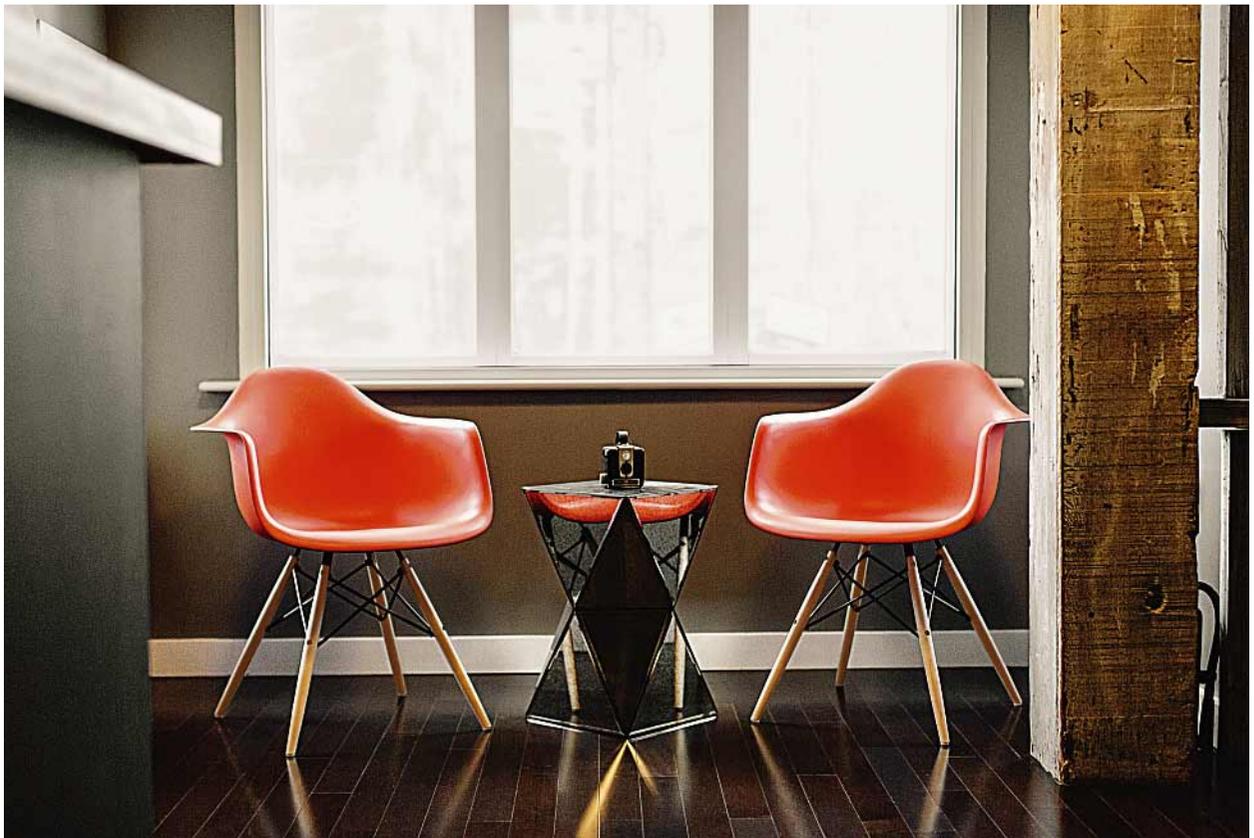
The uniqueness of the space definitely attracts creative people. We have several photographers and video production groups here, along with web designers and developers and a PR company. It's a good mix. Everyone is excited to be here.

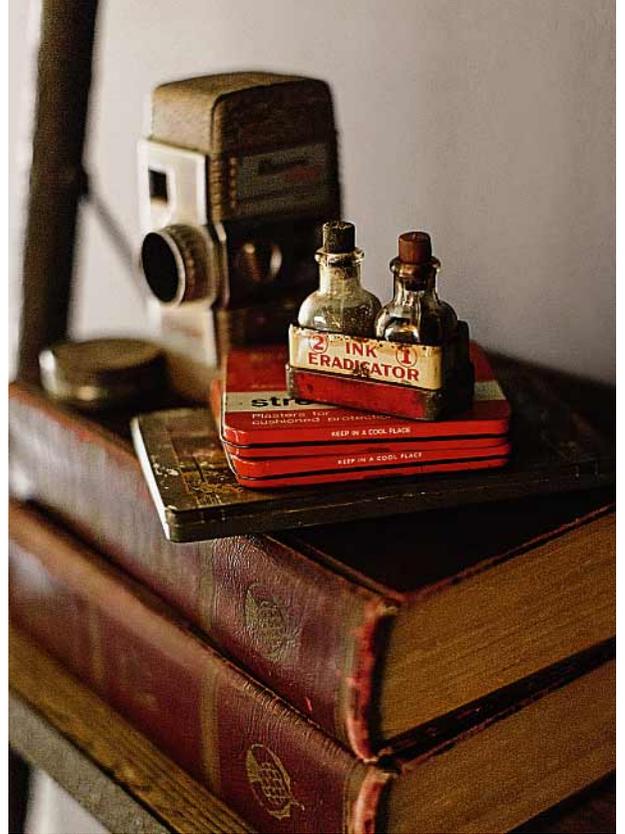
The building is on the National Register of Historic Places, so most of the original features are actually protected by law, which means we couldn't change them even if we wanted to – which we don't. There is a giant grain sieve in the centre of the space that is really amazing. You can climb up a ladder and down into it – if you're brave.

Ty Mattson, Founder

Location	Irvine, California, USA
Founder	Ty Mattson
Size	371 m <sup>2</sup>
Date opened	April 2012
No. of workers	20







Top left: Ball made out of railway spikes.

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Above: Exterior showing the original lima bean and grain processing warehouse.

Following Spread

Top left: Black vintage pendant lights.

Bottom left: 'The Champ' conference room.









# MAKE Business Hub

We've used honest materials such as exposed cement and timber, in reference to the grassroots nature of the companies launching from the space. Our use of clean lines, white tones and exposed wooden elements provides a canvas on which creativity and young business can be built. The MAKE branding and wall illustrations are in white, red and black.

The workstations were custom-designed and produced locally, and cater to the requirements of the mobile modern worker. The chairs and bar stools are by design firm Established & Sons; they were chosen because of the quality of craftsmanship and straightforward, functional design.

We are located in a brand new tower in Dubai's Marina area. It's an architecturally inspiring building and our space has panoramic, floor-to-ceiling windows. The abundance of natural light helps to create a stimulating work environment. We left the ceiling exposed, with all its industrial ducts, pipes and vents. The guiding principles were less interference, fewer unnecessary additions and more exposed elements.

MAKE is an important part of the emerging entrepreneurial movement in the Middle East. Our community is made up of young startup founders, creative freelancers and anyone interested in getting into business for themselves.

The Marina/Jumeirah Beach Residence area is itself a hub and we couldn't have found a better location for MAKE. This part of the city – somewhere between business and beach – has an uplifting atmosphere. Dubai is recovering from the world financial crisis and nowhere is this more apparent than in the Marina. Young, forward-looking people are flocking back, with perhaps a bit more realism than before, looking for opportunities in a region that still promises much growth. The very existence and success of MAKE to date is just one indicator that Dubai has a new society in the making.

Clint Martel Wilfred, Co-Founder



Location	Dubai, UAE
Founder	Clint Martel Wilfred
Size	325 m <sup>2</sup>
Date opened	February 2012
No. of workers	Around 100 each day

# BLINKBLINK



This building oozes character and has had colourful past lives, each of which has left an impression on the space. It was an upholstery shop at one stage and, before that, a pub. When I moved in, I discovered a horde of fabric samples in the cellar – too precious to throw away – and I’ve kept the old beer advertisements in the entrance area intact.

When we first saw this place, it was derelict and in a terrible state. There were holes in the floor and walls and everything was coated in a thick layer of dust. The walls were painted a hideous shade of orange. I did the work myself with a lot of help from friends, for which I am extremely grateful. We stripped away the plaster to reveal the brickwork underneath and then painted it all white, which was an inexpensive way to transform the space quickly. The floorboards were in a really bad way, too, so I painted them black and white for a striking effect.

To create a really personal feel, I filled the building with precious vintage finds that I’ve gathered over the years at flea markets, junk shops and on eBay. It’s difficult to single out a favourite object from my collection, but I particularly love the Danish office chairs and the retro Riso printer, which I bought for next to nothing from a nearby school. I couldn’t live without my vintage typewriter, either, which I use to make quirky address labels.

It’s a small, friendly space, so we behave a bit like a family here and treat it more like a shared flat than an office. The vibe is very easygoing and intimate; people here get to know one another very quickly. Coworkers come and go over time, but so far everybody has got on really well. We have two coworkers – Peter and Lisa – who have been here since the very beginning and, as a result, truly ‘belong’ to the space, but we also have a number of people who join for short periods. Sometimes they just want to use the printer or cut, bind or staple self-published books or magazines. Often, the space becomes a workshop as I run regular open classes and craft sessions.

The location of this building was part of the appeal. It’s on Gerichtstraße in Berlin’s Wedding district. This is not a wealthy or fashionable neighbourhood, but it’s up-and-coming and has a really infectious energy. There’s nowhere else quite like BLINKBLINK in this part of town. I’ve tried to create a place that’s inspiring but blends in with the area, too.

Anna Niestroj, Founder

Location	Berlin, Germany
Founder	Anna Niestroj
Size	65 m <sup>2</sup>
Date opened	June 2012
No. of workers	5 permanent members and varying fluid members



