

Why collaboration starts with defining huddle rooms.

Over the past decades, the office space has drastically changed design. Trendy furniture, green accents and access to quality coffee are examples, just to name a few. In a quest to make the office environment a place to feel at home, interior decorators got a free hand in bringing along a wild variety of concepts, all covered under the umbrella 'fostering productivity'.

Cabañas, phone booths and work pods occupied costly office estate and arguably boosted well being at work. The combination of open floor plans and small segregated work spaces hardly attributed to spontaneous collaboration and even worked counterproductive, as studies done by Fortune have shown.

Organisations floundered with retro looking sofas and tables and many employees refer to silly investments when discussing the attempts to make the office look modern. The real problem? Uncomfortable lounge-like environments could never address the real desires of modern workers.

Modern workers want to share their ideas, present a slide, discuss the highs and lows of the week, be part of a team and celebrate success. Modern workers could individually excel or contribute to a team's collective success. Either way, there is an impending need to come together every once in a while. In these meetings, the accent is on the happening, on the strategy, on the quotation or on the sale, on the individual, or on the group.

The real answer? No matter if people work alone or constantly in groups, all workers have a need to come together in simple and informal meetings. When two or three people align their thoughts, they ideally come together in a huddle to discuss the plan of attack. Exactly like they do in rugby or football. This is where the word 'huddle' has its origins. It is not just another term to ignite a new hype, it is in fact a long existing concept that symbolically describes what really drives productivity.

Huddle rooms are intimate: open office spaces are noisy and easily distract. This definitely does not support collaboration. Huddle rooms provide a quiet

space where a small group of collaborators can have intimate conversations without interruptions.



Huddle rooms are small and effective: the size of a huddle room typically accommodates up to five. The furniture is standard and the room should provide 'just what is needed'. Boardrooms are often equipped with corporate equipment that is not easy to use, whereas huddle rooms are designed to bring one's own device.

Huddle rooms create teams: it is very obvious that large group meetings usually feature two or three dominant speakers. Others may be reluctant to say something in a group. In huddle environments, all are equally involved and are more likely to contribute. Whereas large group meetings may result into divisions, huddle meetings typically make everyone feel involved.

Huddle rooms are informal: spontaneous meetings can lead to great outcomes. Huddle meetings require no reservation, have an informal character and don't necessarily have an agenda. Just as the character of the meeting, the room should be designed to accommodate free spirited joining.

What defines a huddle room?

The huddle room is designed to empower people to meet quickly and do more with less. The modern worker could be tech savvy, but there is no need for ultra automation of a huddle room. What is important, is to provide uniformity for all users of the room and make sure that people enjoy using the room.

A table that allows sitting or standing is the basic need. Most quick meetings are to align thoughts. A whiteboard definitely helps to mark some points.

Some meetings require the consult of a remote partner, upon which a phone or speaker is the center point of attraction. Other meetings are done through webinar or through video conference. Some gatherings require it all.



A huddle room is successful when people use it time and time again. It sounds simple, but the essence is in simple factors. When designing the ideal huddle room, important aspects to consider are:

1. Avoiding over-automation: there is no demand to design rooms that could do hundreds of things whereas the basic needs are simple presentation, electronic white boarding or short video conferencing.
2. Spend wise: there is no need for high budgets, but also avoid cheap electronic whiteboards, most of them are merely touch screens that have no other functionality than extending the mouse to the display and they don't add anything to productivity.
3. Manage expectations: describe what the room offers and what is possible, but also highlight the limitations. Emphasis is ease of use.

How to create the ideal huddle room!

Before equipping a room with tools and equipment to make it an ideal huddle room, it is really important to understand that teamwork is segmented into three different domains. And this will have impact on the allocation of systems to each room.

The abbreviation 'UC' is often referred to as one term to cover it all. But does it really? Professional integrators distinguish between Unified Communications, Unified Conferencing and Unified Collaboration. These definitions will help to create rooms and manage expectations towards the successful use and functionality of each room. If the segmentation is well defined for the organisation, it is a lot easier to decide what is needed in each room.

Unified Communication

When combining voice and video and cabling some of it to the display in the room, the most elementary steps are made to create a huddle room that answers probably 80% of the questions: people have a need to come together, cable their laptop to a display and present a (web) application to two or three colleagues, involving someone remotely. Skype for Business, GoToMeeting and Zoom are examples. It brings together the capacity of the computer to a larger display, allowing multiple people to be heard and seen and to chat.

Unified Conferencing

When considering quality and when rooms are interconnected using the power of high definition, in association with audio visual integration of high touch components, this form of teamwork is called unified conferencing.

Unified Collaboration

Taking both unified communication and conferencing to a next level, unleashing creativity to the maximum extent, requires the implementation of all that collaboration equipment has to offer. This includes intuitive touch displays, allowing a maximum of exchange of ideas with practically no limitation towards working together across locations.

Summary

Hence, the ideal huddle room is defined as a communication room, a conference room or a collaboration room. A communication room is the easiest to set up and will bring least cost and simply extends the laptop to a larger display, allowing a group of people to participate in chat, voice and video communication. A conferencing room incorporates the power of video conferencing in a logically equipped huddle room, allowing presentation, voice and video communication to run simultaneously, while banking on the perfect quality professional systems have to offer. And the collaboration room adds the intelligence of multi user enhanced touch displays, supporting multiple users to scratch ideas as logically as all of them using a gigantic flip board simultaneously.

Please consult DEKOM about a number of standardised huddle rooms for each situation. DEKOM did not invent the huddle room, but gathered vast experience, working with 3.000 international organisations in over 130 countries. And being the only European player certified for Microsoft Surface Hub, Prysm, Multitaction, and Oblong, DEKOM definitely knows the secrets of huddle success.