

Employees of the future will choose where and when they work

By 2040, knowledge workers will decide where and how they want to work, according to a new report on the workplace of the future by Johnson Controls.



Dr Marie Puybaraud

The Smart Workplace 2040 report, produced by Johnson Controls' Global WorkPlace Solutions (GWS) business, describes how, 25 years from now, work will be seen as something workers do, rather than a place they commute to each day. Work patterns will be radically different compared with today, with no fixed place or timetable. Instead, a new generation of workspace consumers will choose their workplace based on an often-fluid work schedule. Most workers will frequently work from home, and will choose to visit work hubs or a 'trophy workplace', a highly experiential environment where they meet and network with other individuals.

There will be no set hours and the emphasis will be on getting the work done, while workers' wellness will take priority over work. Meanwhile technology will bring together networks of skilled individuals who operate in a similar way to today's entrepreneurs, with collaboration the major driver of business performance and a core competency for every employee.

A 'flexwork' contract

The report was peer reviewed in a series of three workshops in the US, Europe, and Asia-Pacific involving 26 workplace experts. To illustrate its vision, the report explores the workplace of the future through the eyes of Nina, a knowledge worker living in 2040. It describes how her working environment is split across her home, her eco-campus in the city, and other working hubs to which she has access. She has a 'flexwork' contract, meaning there is no limit to how little or how much she works as long as the work is done. Her home is a hyper-connected, adaptive environment that responds to her family's bio-health indicators, while complex software applications suggest what Nina should do to maximise performance.

The report's author, director of GWS Global WorkPlace Innovation, Dr Marie Puybaraud, said: "Six years ago, we described how technology would transform the way we work by 2030. Since then we have seen a significant acceleration in technological developments with the launch of the iPad, the invasion of the first wearable technologies, and remote working becoming the norm.

"This new report takes our vision a step further. In 2040 we will consume space, not own it, so the report envisions how this will affect the everyday life of an employee and businesses. The findings have implications for leaders and real estate managers around the world as they anticipate the way our society and technology is changing and transforming the way we work."

The report makes eight recommendations, including dismantling the fixed office hours model in favour of flexible working contracts, focusing workspaces on end users' needs and enhancing service delivery to embrace a high human touch, while designing working environments that reflect new ways of collaborating across teams. It also suggests organisational transformations to improve the way dispersed teams work together, and the integration of 'shy' technologies to track activity, record experiences and respond to user demand.

Download the [Smart Workplace 2040 report](#)

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