



# HOW TO DESIGN YOUR OFFICE FOR THE FUTURE & BEYOND

EBOOK BY **CLESTRA**



Beginning in 1913 with the creation of the first relocatable partition by American founder Earl F. Hauserman, these products become globally recognised in 1931 when they were used within the Empire State building.

From then onwards, the company grew globally up until 1990 when the company became CLESTRA.

Now a leading modular interior construction provider, CLESTRA is over 100 years old and continuing to innovate with its circular approach to build future-proof office spaces and advanced facilities around the world.

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# MAKING THE OFFICE WORTH IT

« There is no replacement for face-to-face collaboration »

Tim Cook, CEO Apple

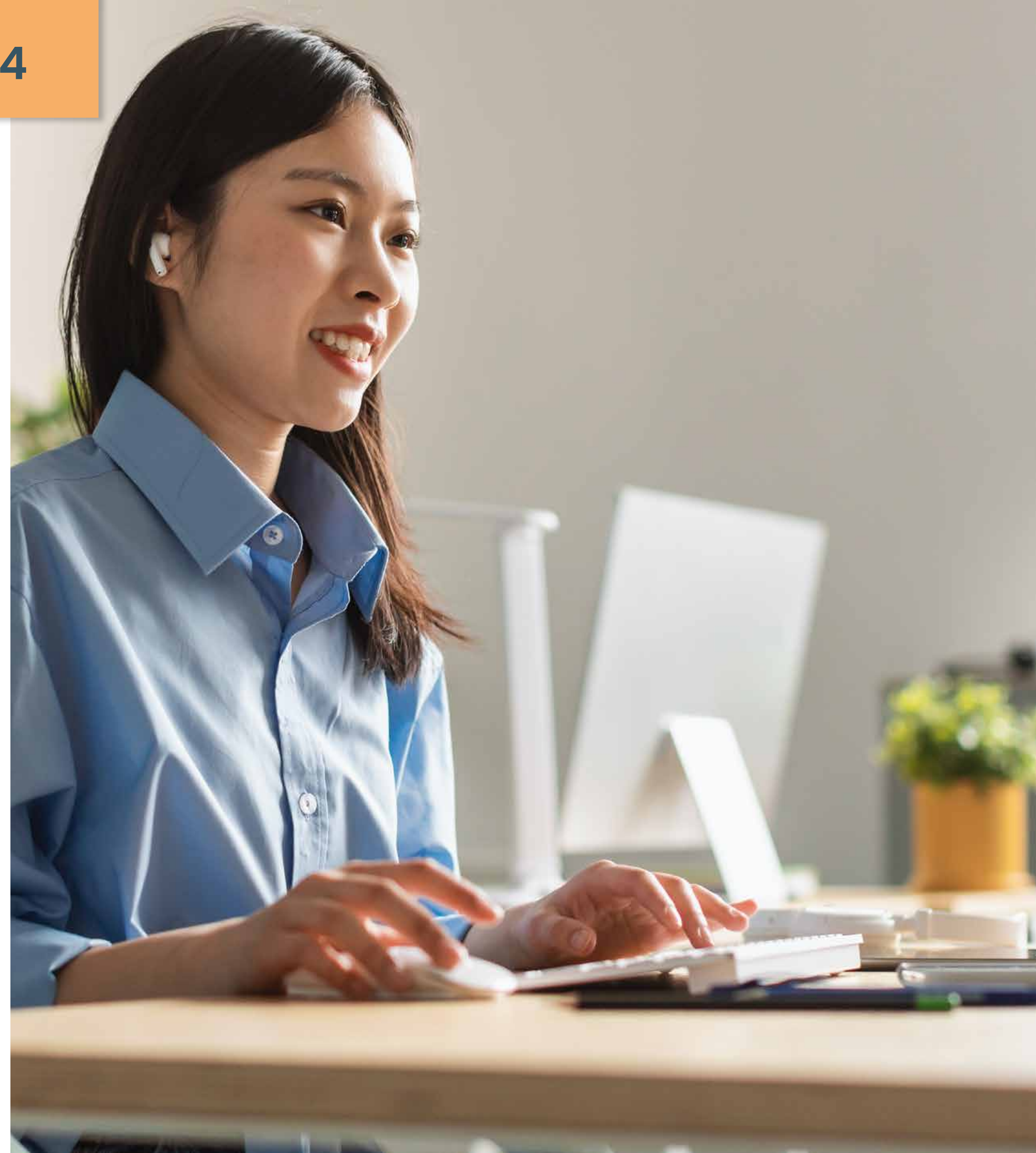


## The prolonged work from home periods most employees experienced at the peak of the pandemic have spurred profound changes among the workforce.

Despite lockdowns and travel restrictions now being a distant memory for most people, the enduring trend of remote working shows how much the pandemic has changed workers' relationship toward office work.

For companies, Covid has also demonstrated that different work organizations could be implemented without hampering employees' productivity, thanks in part to the extensive deployment of digital solutions.

Hybrid work seems to be a long-lasting trend in the corporate world as shown in *Microsoft's Work Trend Index*, in which 38% of surveyed employees declared themselves as hybrid-workers, up 7% from previous year. On top of that, 52% of employees said they were considering going hybrid or remote in years ahead.





**MAKING THE OFFICE WORTH IT**

These figures can be balanced by 50% of leaders declaring their company plans for full-time office work in the next year.

In this polarized environment, it is now important for business leaders to demonstrate the relevancy of offices by making it worth the time spent in. In other words, generating significant added-value for employees compared to work from home. Maximizing social interactions and collaboration will be essential to draw people back to offices in the post-covid corporate era, where most operational tasks can be performed remotely. However, most employees would agree that face to face collaboration remains a key driver for innovation and efficiency.

**A 2021 JLL's study about the *Future of the office* showed that over 90% of employees interviewed said they want to have the option of working in a physical office space.**

New office designs should offer more collaboration rooms to perform focused group work on the spot without disturbing surrounding workers. These rooms should also be fitted with all necessary performance tools to allow smooth screen sharing and collaborative work.



**38%** of surveyed employees declared themselves as hybrid-workers  
(Microsoft 2021's Work Index)



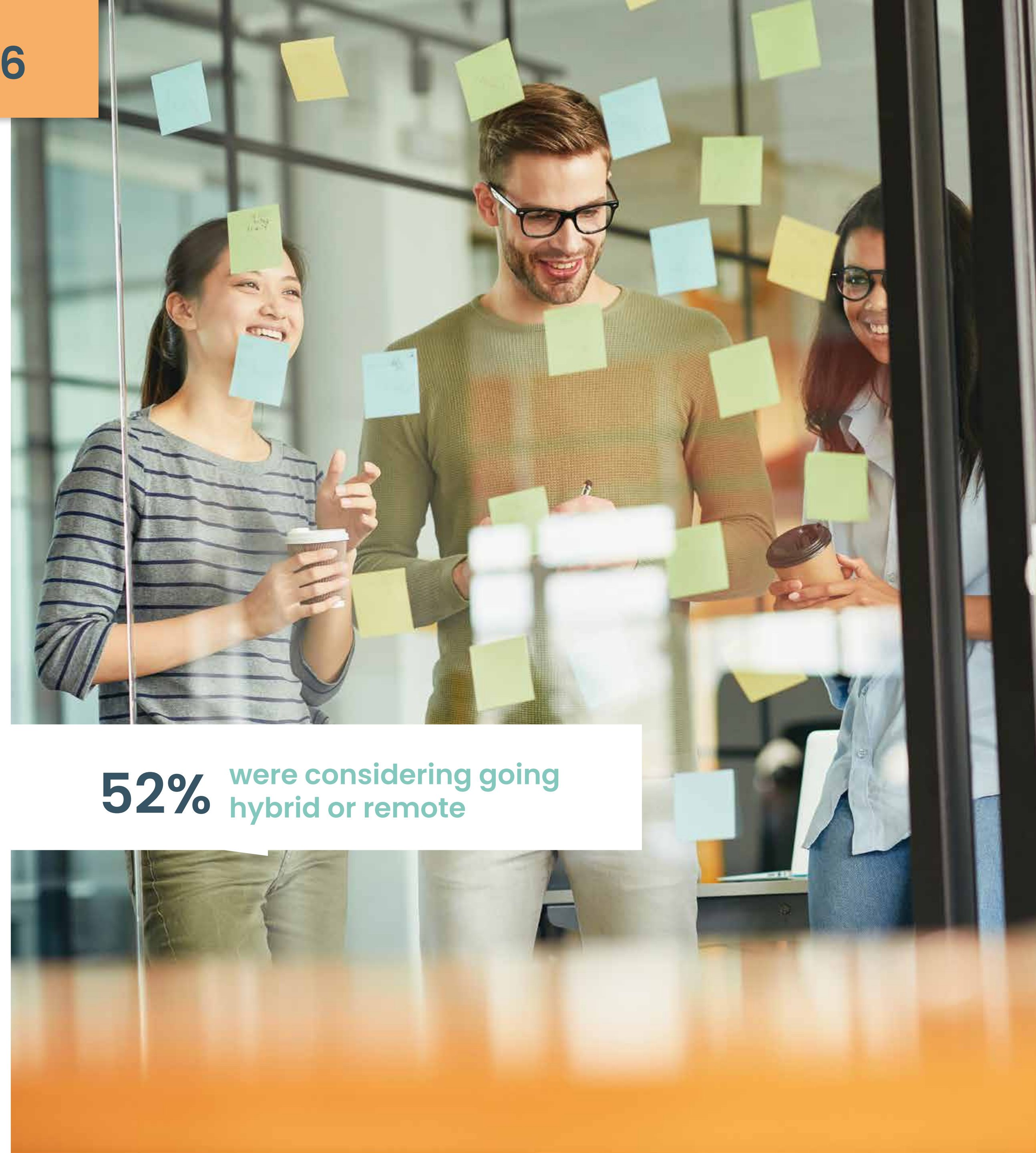


**MAKING THE OFFICE WORTH IT**

Digital tools are key to materialize the benefits of the office compared to work from home, though we shouldn't overlook traditional work equipment that have been in use for decades. An abundance of easily writable surfaces and access to a good range of colourful marker pencils can trigger fruitful brainstorming sessions between team members.

**Let's not underestimate the power of a group of motivated people and a few whiteboards to solve complex business issues or invent your company's new cutting-edge product!**

Serendipity can be a powerful competitive advantage and your office should be shaped to max out on those opportunities for collaboration.



**52%** were considering going hybrid or remote



A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a dark blue blazer, a light blue button-down shirt, and tan trousers, stands in a bright, modern office space. She is wearing large yellow headphones and holding a white coffee cup. She is looking down at the cup with a slight smile. The background features a large window with a view of a building and some greenery. The floor is light-colored wood. The overall atmosphere is professional and relaxed.

# HYGIENE AND WELLBEING: NEW FACTORS TO CONSIDER

« In the longer term, health and wellness will play a more prominent role in building design. »

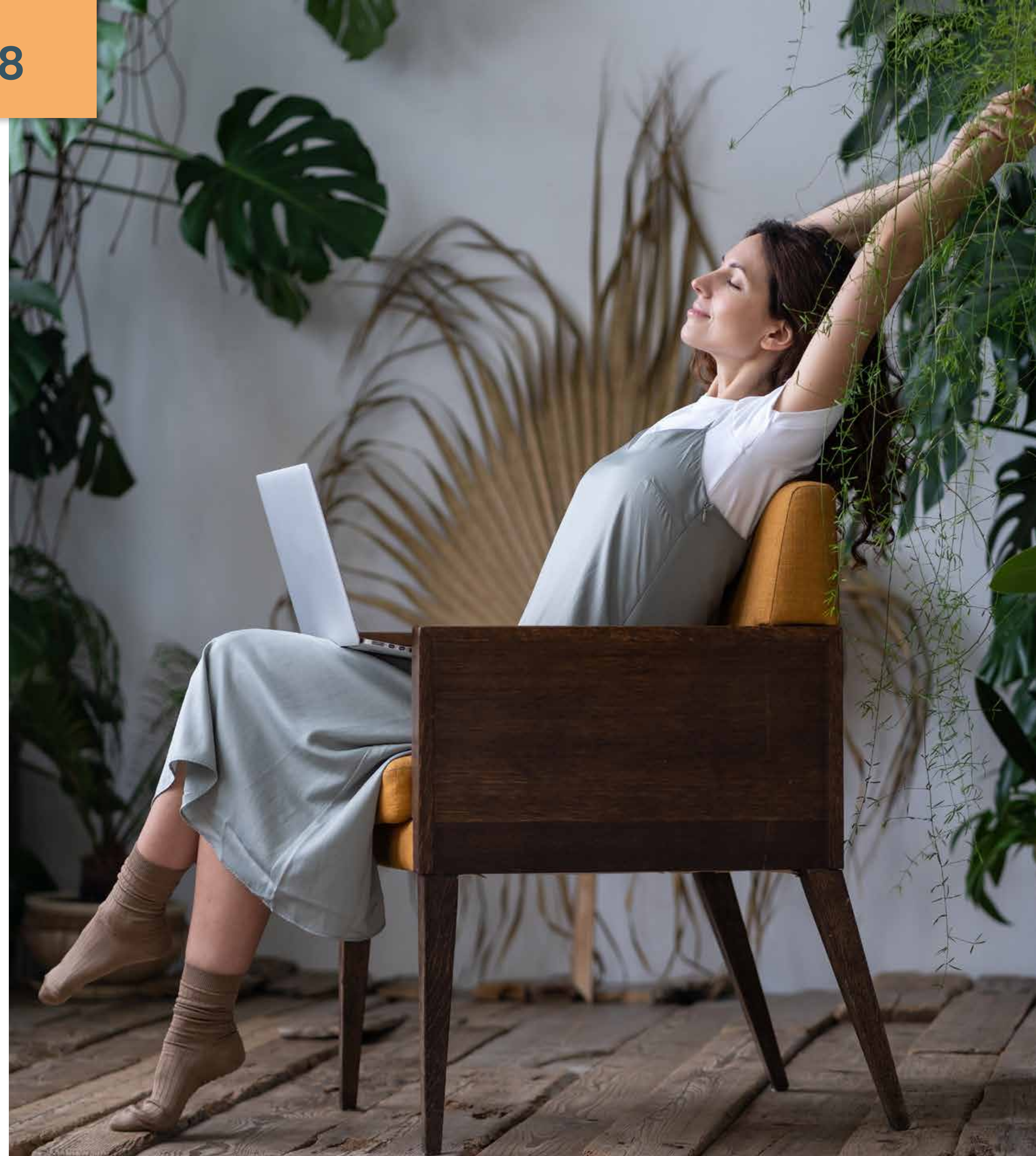
Evan Choo, Ex. Director, CBRE China



## Following global lockdowns, emphasizing the importance of positive mental health, wellbeing and hygiene within your workplace needs to be at the top of your priorities.

These topics have undoubtedly become a priority among employees in the wake of covid, as shown in *Microsoft's Work index*: 53% of respondents said they are more likely to prioritize health and wellbeing over work. Post-covid work environments should reflect these new aspirations in the way they are designed and built.

Health and wellbeing can have different meanings according to the person interrogated, but common answers would be to provide employees with wellbeing benefits such as sport facilities, quality food, coffee or even cosy furniture mimicking living rooms or hotel lobbies.





## HYGIENE & WELLBEING: NEW FACTORS TO CONSIDER

These ideas were already well represented before the pandemic, driven by Silicon Valley companies offering cutting-edge workplaces to foster a sense of belonging and sense of community among their employees. Although these designs are far from being obsolete, we cannot help but think they are only a part of the equation of health and wellbeing in the workplace.

Two years of mask wearing and vaccination campaigns have bolstered our desire for health and wellbeing, to a degree where physical closeness can sometimes be perceived as detrimental to personal safety for some people. Offices were also logically flagged as high-risk areas for contaminations during the worst periods of covid.

**It is now essential to reassure employees and emphasize air quality as a core component of a safe work environment.**

Indoor Air Quality has been a public health concern for over two decades now. Researchers estimate that we spend about 90% of our time in enclosed space, whether it is at home, in the office or at school, resulting in significant exposure to indoor air pollutants.





## HYGIENE & WELLBEING: NEW FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Among numerous sources for indoor air pollution in the office, the most prominent are VOCs emitted from building materials and furniture, sometimes long after the initial office fit-out is conducted. The *International Well Institute* recommends the selection of low or no VOC emitting materials for your office environment to prevent the deterioration of your indoor air quality.

Protecting occupants from harmful particles and micro-organism spreading can also be done by implementing air purifiers across premises to monitor air quality levels in every room. These air purifiers are also surprisingly efficient to eliminate all airborne pathogens, including infamous coronaviruses and influenza viruses. Another brick into your post-covid workplace.

Closed meeting rooms can also be fitted with air transfer partition panels to increase air flow return between the outside and the inside of the room and ensure clean air circulation across your office. We know only too well the repercussions of team members quickly becoming ill and unable to work for a number of days. 'Pandemic proofing' can be both a way to prevent absenteeism and a way to fight covid anxiety among co-workers.







# TRANSFORMABLE WORKSPACES

« We also anticipate the end of hot desks and the redefinition of shared spaces. »

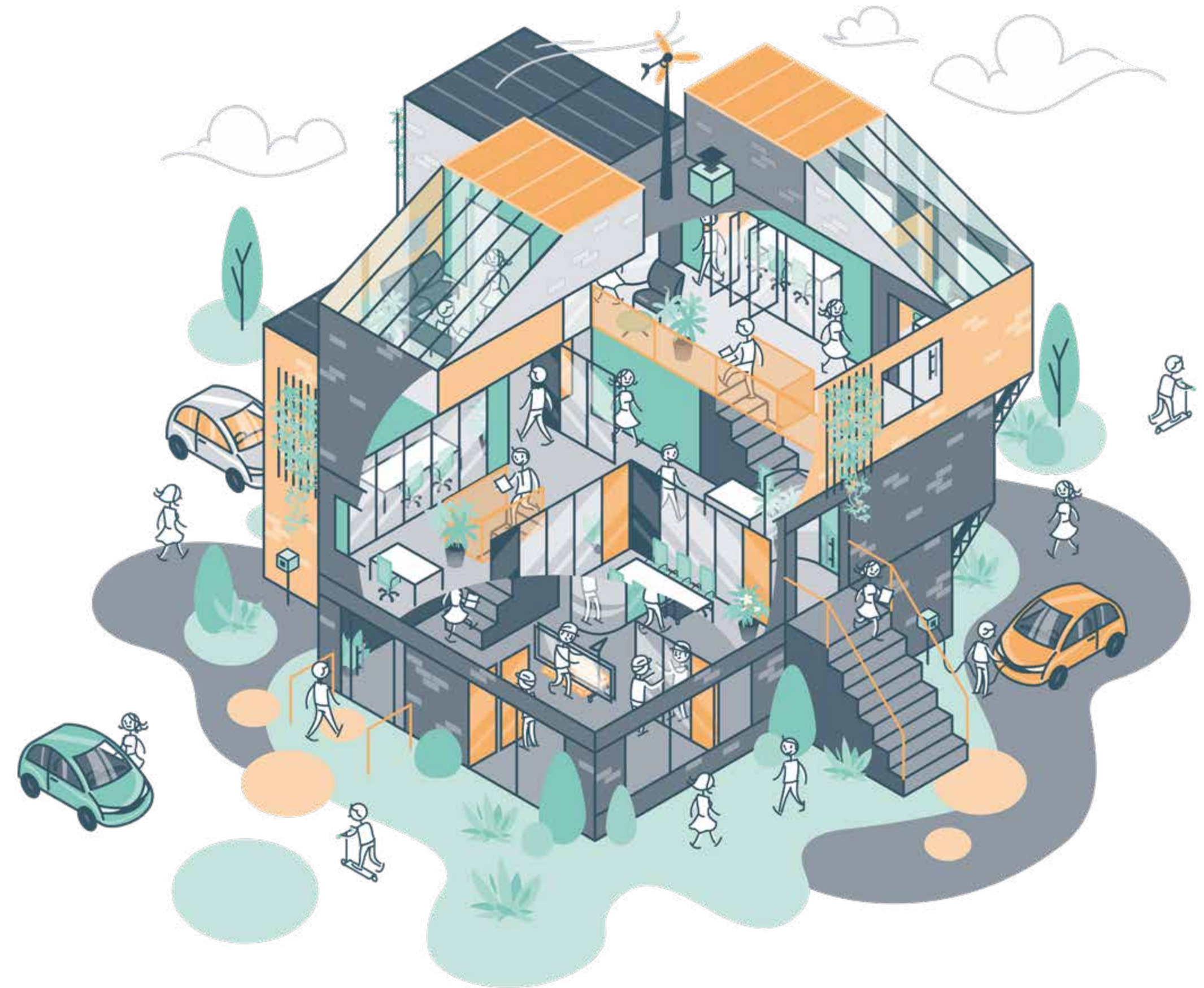
Future of offices in a post-pandemic world, Arup, 2021



## Covid-19 dramatically challenged the resilience of companies and employees.

Our ability to endure major disruptions in our lives and the coping mechanisms we have developed showed how important this notion of resilience has become on a personal scale. For companies, the ability to overcome market shocks and supply chain disruptions can be viewed as competitive advantages in many industries. It contributes to the emergence of new leaders while less resilient companies tend to lose ground.

Implementing large-scale work from home schemes whilst maintaining productivity was, in a way, a test to corporate organizations' plasticity and their ability to rapidly react to unpredicted changes. As people flow back to offices, it is time to go further and embed resiliency directly into workspaces to turn them into flexible assets able to support a company's business transformations.



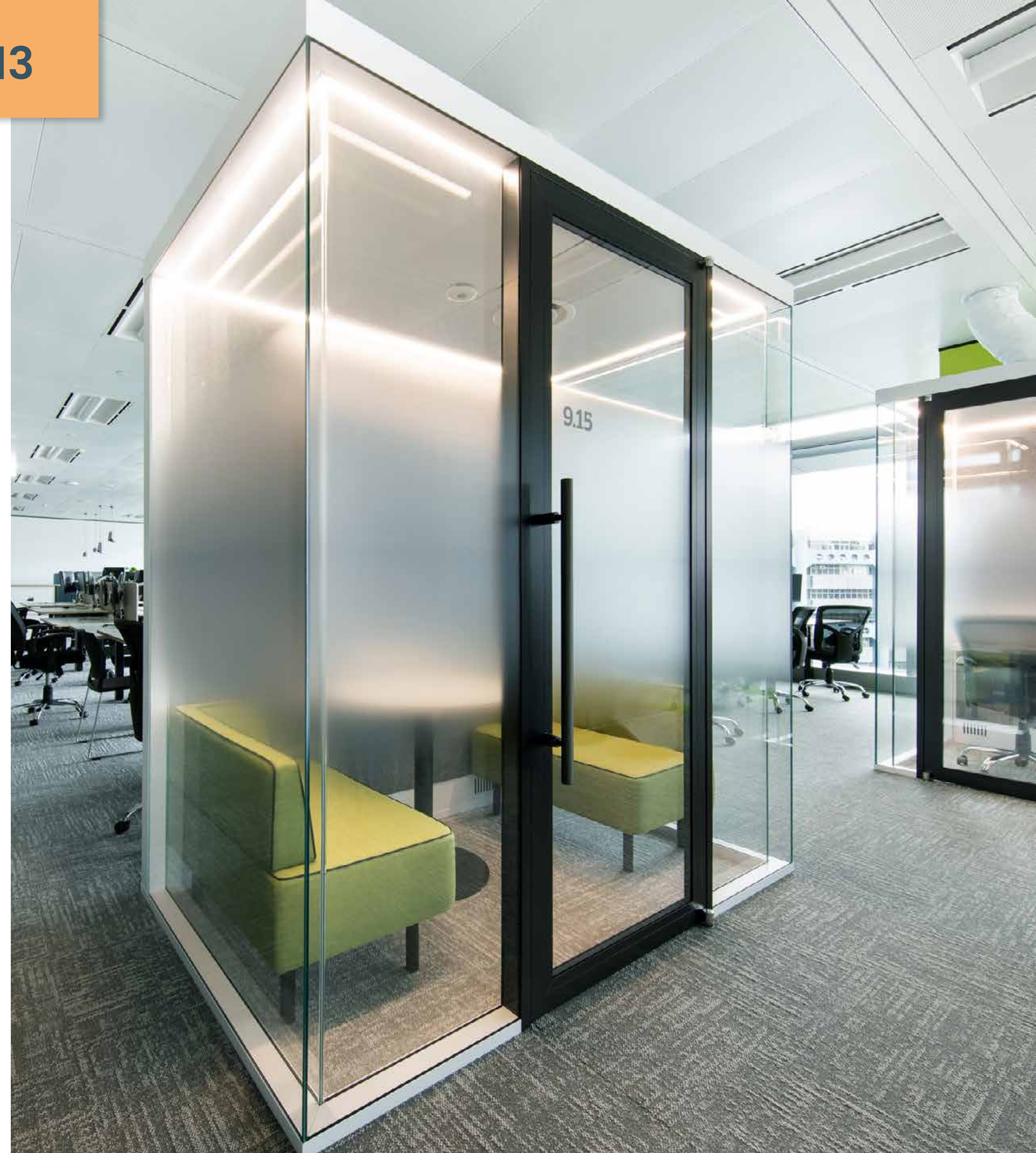


**TRANSFORMABLE WORKSPACES**

Office usages traditionally evolve over time to respond to broader work transformations across industries. For instance, perhaps large open spaces were relevant a few years ago for the nature of tasks your employees used to perform, but work transformations may have rendered them inoperant or uncomfortable in this era of ultra-connectivity. There is no “one-size-fits-all” layout design in office planning, however there are solutions to make existing offices more flexible and ready to adapt to your organizational needs.

**Need to quickly add a few meeting rooms without disrupting the whole floorplan and disturb surrounding teams?**

Deploy Modular acoustic PODs to accommodate up to 12 persons and create privacy bubbles in the middle of an open space. What’s more? You can even integrate your usual collaborative tools inside.





## Need to free some space to create a relaxation area?

Dismantle your existing PODs and convert them into separating walls to offer more isolated areas across your office.

The key to business resiliency is adaptability to change. Organizations must remain flexible enough to quickly react to any external events or unanticipated disruptions. The same goes for your office. Prioritizing interior fittings and fixtures that are designed for disassembly opens up limitless layout possibilities, without mobilizing too much time and resources.

Because you want to minimize disruptions and unoccupancy rates in your premises, standardized modular solutions are the way to go to always stay ahead of the curve.





# MITIGATING CARBON FOOTPRINT THROUGH CIRCULARITY

**39%** of global carbon emissions are linked with the built environment sector  
2020 GSR for buildings and construction



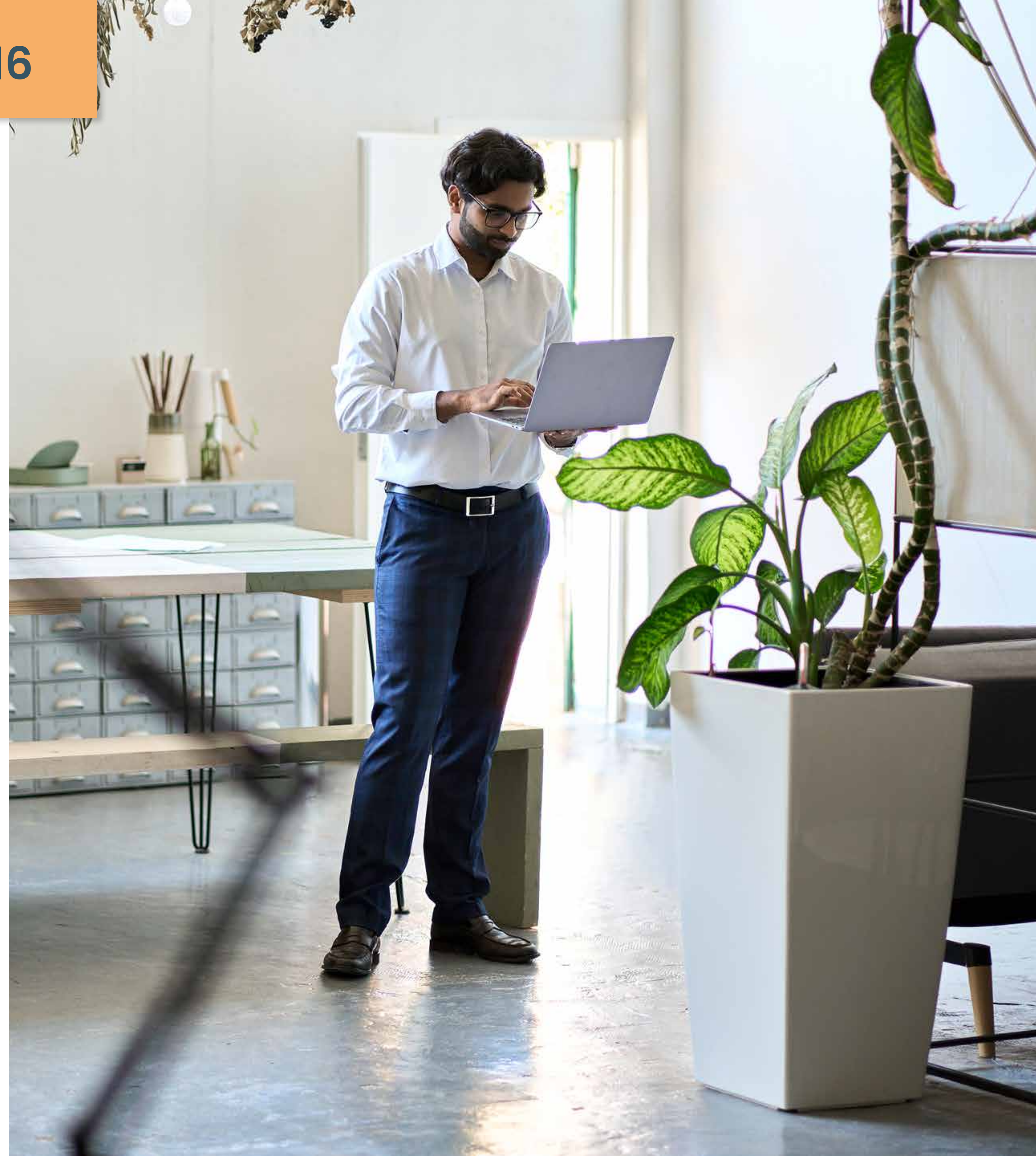


## Gone are the days when climate change was perceived as a distant threat.

Successive reports issued by the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)* have provided world leaders and business actors with a concrete window for action, but also a crude view on disasters expected to happen if nothing changes.

Most countries are experiencing regular periods of extreme temperatures and destructive natural phenomenon are already threatening societies.

**As for the built environment sector, it's contribution to global warming is tremendous: the sector is accountable for about 39% of total global carbon emissions.**





## MITIGATING CARBON FOOTPRINT THROUGH CIRCULARITY

A large share of emissions is linked to heating or cooling systems necessary to maintain acceptable temperatures in buildings located in a variety of climates. However, around 10% of global emissions are directly linked to buildings construction, from materials extraction and manufacturing to waste disposal. Finding alternatives to our current extractive construction model is now both an environmental and financial issue, since resource scarcity and demand will inevitably drive prices up.

**The good news is that solutions to limit your office's embodied carbon footprint already exist.**

Current office construction generally follows a linear process: materials, fittings and fixtures are built to dispose and will be discarded once occupiers move out the premises. Offices in major central business districts can have surprisingly short life spans, as short as 2 to 3 years in cities like Hong Kong or Singapore. As a result, the office construction sector generates high levels of waste and consequently high demand for virgin materials.

Circular economy,  
one of the foundations  
of our ecosystem



\*Embodied carbon» is the term used by the [World Green Building Council](#) to define construction emissions, from upfront building stage all the way to end of life stage and beyond.

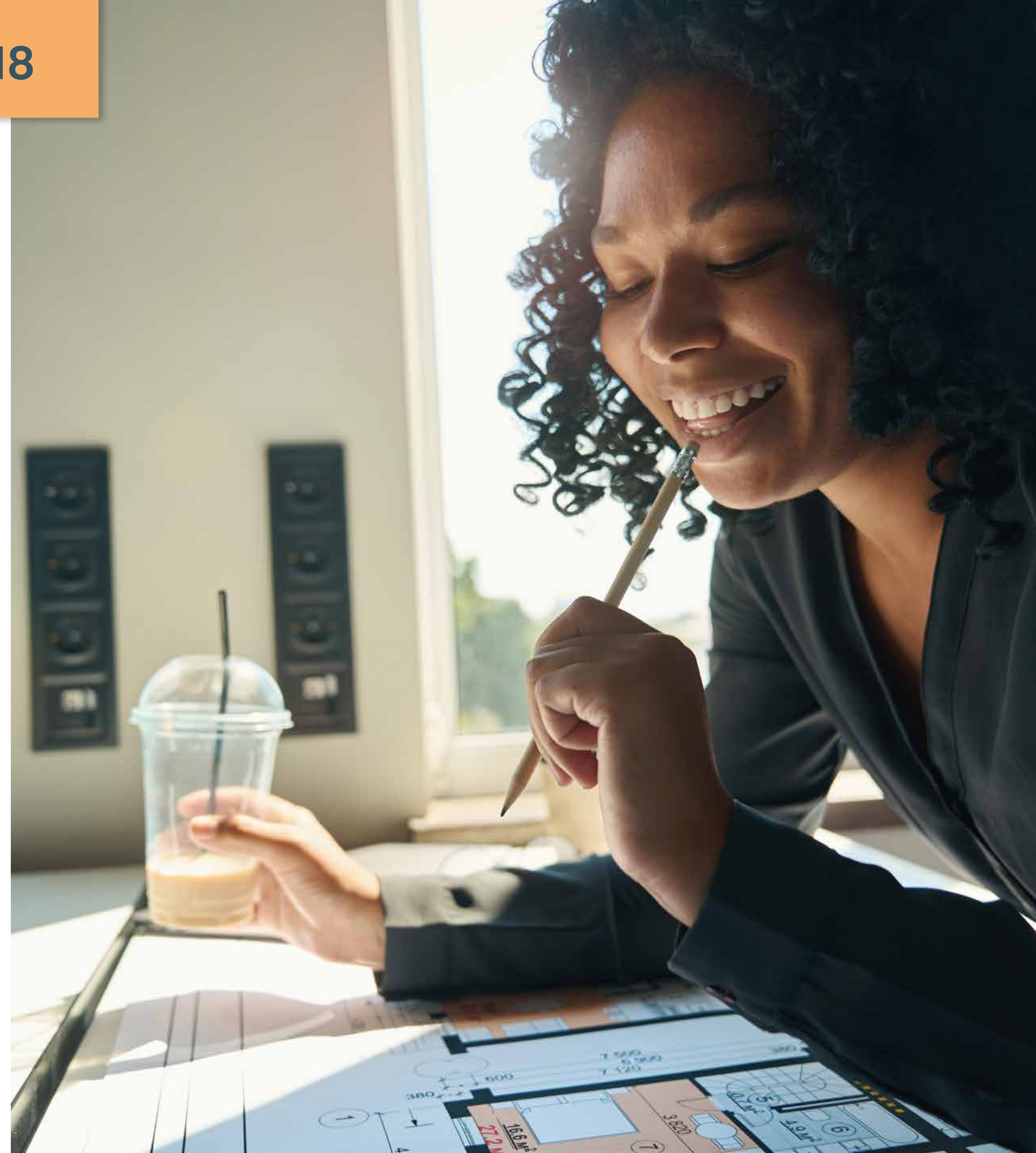


## MITIGATING CARBON FOOTPRINT THROUGH CIRCULARITY

In order to close the loop of materials consumption and disposal and instead create virtuous circles, you can take actions at the early stages of your office project planning by considering standardized solutions designed for disassembly and reusability.

Selecting the right partners from the very beginning can help project stakeholders to coordinate efficiently and propose the most adapted engineering responses to your challenges. Across the whole spectrum of fixtures and fittings, office partitions are an obvious candidate for standardization and reusability: usually built to dispose using plasterboard and a variety of other materials for finishes, they will eventually be knocked down when tenants end their lease or revamp their spaces.

By nudging your design teams toward Modular partitioning and furnishing, you will not only make sure all project stakeholders are aligned on the same approach, but you will also ensure most of your office's fixtures and fittings are fully demountable, relocatable and reusable to suit your evolving needs.





**MITIGATING CARBON FOOTPRINT THROUGH CIRCULARITY**

Reusability is a great source of carbon offsets as it cuts carbon emissions linked to materials extraction and transformation as well as waste disposal.

On a larger scale, switching from the take-make-waste model is a significant paradigm shift that all industries will have to undertake if we collectively aim at reducing global greenhouse gases emissions.

I am sure we are not the only ones tired of seeing these mountains of office scraps every time tenants move out their premises!

**10%**

of global emissions are directly linked with buildings construction

2020 GSR for buildings and construction

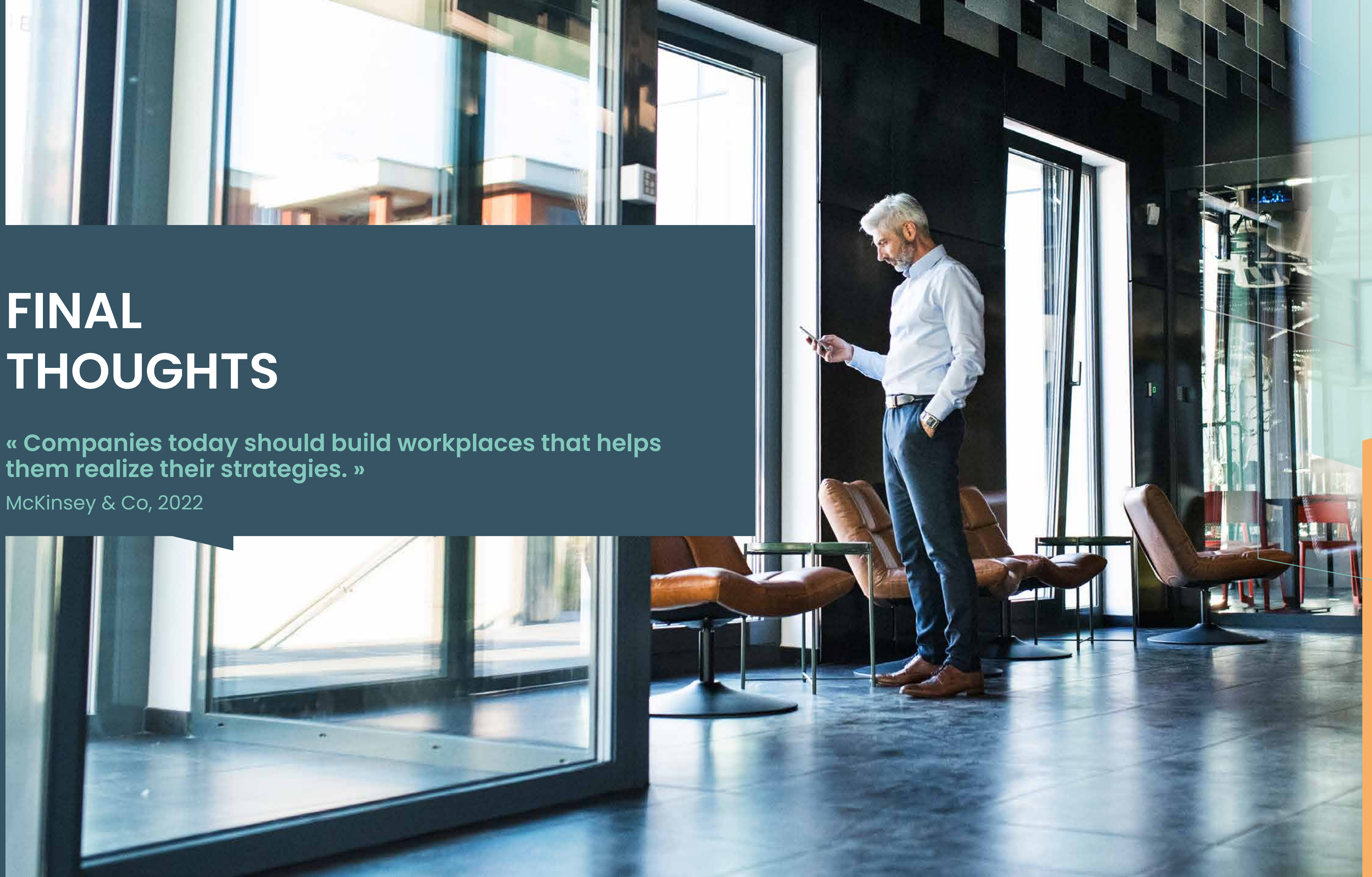




# FINAL THOUGHTS

« Companies today should build workplaces that helps them realize their strategies. »

McKinsey & Co, 2022



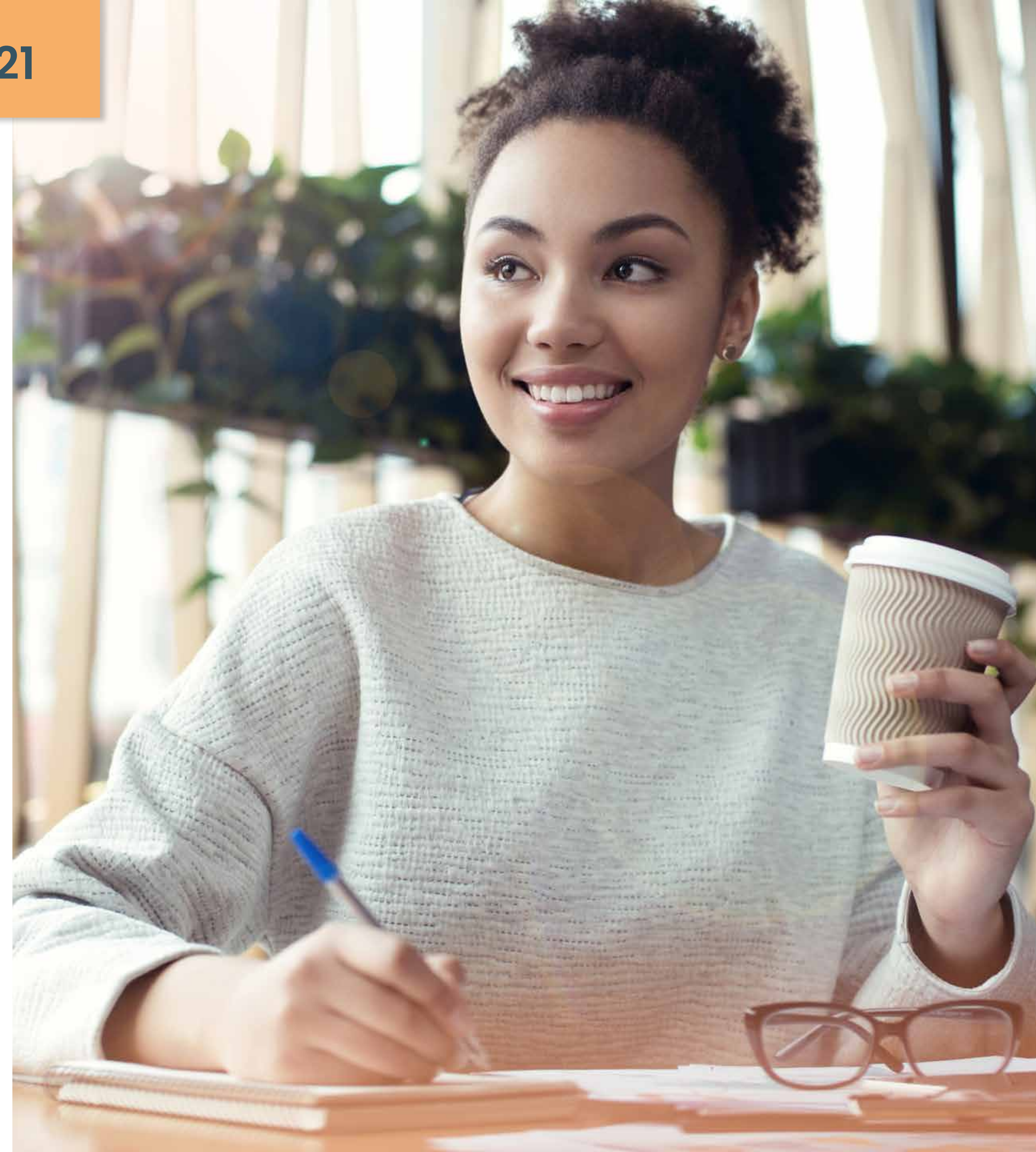


## FINAL THOUGHTS

**There's a lot to take in when it comes to designing the future of your workspace, but don't let the jargon, data and Covid statistics let you feel overwhelmed, it's simple.**

As the world around you changes, you need to make that the environment you are working in does, too. Your space needs to be an extension of society. Companies could embrace these changes and make their real estate choices reflect these mutations.

From creating spaces that truly embed flexibility in their core to covid-proof premises, there are plenty of ways to build today and thrive tomorrow. Fit the needs of your business, meet deep society changes, choose the right interior fit out partner and watch your business soar.





# SHAPING ALL FUTURES

Build today to thrive tomorrow

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February 2023