ited from the industrial societies of the nineteenth century no longer have the functional logic underpinning them that once made them impossible to ignore. That we are in urgent need of new conventions becomes abundantly clear when the printouts of time utilization surveys–a technique of recording observations of when people are in the office and of what they are doing–are examined. It is not true, as is often observed, that the office seems half-empty even at the busiest times of day. Observations of hundreds of cases show that the truth is that office workplaces are rarely occupied for more than one-third of the time that they are available, even during the core 8-hour working day. Even today, with our still relatively undeveloped use of information technology, office workers are much more mobile both within and outside the office than is assumed in conventional space standards and design practice.

It seems obvious that the trend toward even greater mobility will continue. Home working will be an experience that most of us will share to some extent. Daily schedules will become more ragged and more complex. Office buildings will become more sociable and more permeable, less impersonal and hermetic. Patterns of commuting will become more diffuse. The function of the city, and of the office within the city, will be to attract and support mobile, demanding, and highly interactive people rather than simply to accommodate a static, docile, silent workforce at the lowest price.

CHANGES IN DESIGN

Against this background

Against this background the conventional North American working environment, however efficient it may be–and even that is highly questionable given observed patterns of how space is actually used over time–is failing to stimulate a changing, increasingly knowledge-based workforce to greater productivity because it is broadcasting the wrong messages.

A recent book by Jeremy Myerson and Philip Ross, *The Creative Office,* provides an interesting measure of the impact of some of the changes that are taking place in office design as a result of the three drivers outlined above. The book, typical of a burgeoning genre of semi-design, semi-business pub-

lications, illustrates 43 international case studies of innovative office design. The lively running commentary reflects general user satisfaction. The case studies are grouped thematically–new offices that exemplify teamwork, innovative environments that facilitate the exchange of ideas, novel workplaces that have been designed to encourage community, and, finally, fresh interiors where information technology has been used to facilitate mobility both within and outside the office.

This is just the kind of data that conventional developers and real estate brokers still seem to find very easy to dismiss. In the conservative property industry, change is resisted. This may be because many of the cases are examples of the new economy–particularly media and information technology. Another possible reason is that by no means all the cases are North American–only 13, in fact; while 13 are from Continental Europe (including one from Turkey); another 13 are British, and four are from Asia/Pacific.

However, neither international experience nor creative enterprise should be treated lightly at this point in the development of a new global economy based increasingly on creativity and knowledge. Most of the cases are new economy businesses but, interestingly, the old economy is heavily represented too. Myerson and Ross's case studies include such mainstream heavy hitters as Boeing, Owens Corning, and McDonalds, as well as six major banks and insurance companies, not to mention IBM, Nokia, and Andersen Consulting (with two case studies). All this provides a useful insight into how new business trends are affecting some relatively advanced users of office space.

This book raises one question rather sharply for those who provide, design, or deliver corporate real estate. The 43 case studies are all examples of users who have succeeded, by extraordinary effort, for one business purpose or another, in achieving something radically new and different from office design. Whether reinventing or simply inventing themselves, what choices have they made regarding their office buildings and design of spaces?

Eighteen of the businesses (42 percent) have gone to the trouble of building new, purpose-designed offices for themselves. In all of these, in North America as well as in Northern Europe, care has been taken to invent novel, highly unconventional–not necessarily the most efficient–architectural forms to create places where ideas can be more easily exchanged or a sense of com-