

4. Workplaces designed in parallel with cultural and work process shifts allow people to work smarter for better productivity. The workplace fosters creativity.
5. Function and flexibility are imperative. Workplace factors such as ergonomics, noise level, lighting, HVAC must support worker.

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, upon recommendation by the interior design professionals, retained a professional production company that specializes in corporate communications. Schroeder describes the process: “The production company was to produce a video tape that would run on a continuous basis during the work week throughout the duration of the construction period of the new headquarters facility. The video appeared in an auxiliary area of the existing facility as an abbreviated explanation of the corporate goals, values, relationships, and processes delivered by corporate management. The message was directly aligned with how the workplace would be a tool to break down the barriers and allow ‘team collaboration’ and ‘collective knowledge.’ The six-person workplace mock-up adjacent to the video monitor was featured and described by the facilities leader and design team. It was available for all BCBSA employees to visit, try on, and visualize their new work environment. The vision, the plan, the reality was set for change success.”

It is important to note that departmental representatives were chosen to participate in a liaison group, and this group was charged with facilitating interactive communication to reinforce the transition toward the new BCBSA culture. One way that group “buy-in” was fostered was achieved through voting by the staff regarding their preference of individual workplaces or open spaces enabling teamwork. As often happens, “the natural human response to resist change” became the overriding opinion, and they elected to continue with a configuration that was similar to their existing environment. The BCBSA traditional work environment was 60 percent enclosed workplaces and 40 percent open workplaces with stand-up privacy. The proposed new environment included a move to 10 percent enclosed workplaces and 90 percent open workplaces. The envisioned spontaneous teaming environment emerged as those involving teaming in scheduled meeting places, returning to individual workplaces with stand-up privacy. However, 10 percent of the open workplaces were housed in a configuration of continual, spontaneous collaboration. A radical transition from a culture of low interaction and high autonomy to a culture of high interaction and impromptu teaming would

have required continuous training and modeling of new processes and behavior protocols. As it was, behavior protocols and processes were evolving and not fully identified. Therefore, the results of the voting for “buy-in” became a *transition stage* toward the ultimate vision.

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### A CASE STUDY: A FINANCIAL COMPANY

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# In a different example

In a different example with a slightly different result, a financial company embarked upon a change management process with one of their divisions, Business Credit (BC). They felt it was critical to the success of the space planning and design process that a consistent understanding among all participants was needed. All needed to understand the principles to be employed, and possess a clear sense of their relative priority. BC’s senior managers spent considerable time discussing the alternatives, and developing a list of space-planning design principles, ranked in order of importance.

BC was to be a prototype for future planning and cultural change. It needed to implement organizational changes to achieve its goal to become the pre-eminent U.S. asset-based lender. To meet its strategic intent, BC needed to centralize its key operations on one floor (of nine) within the headquarters of the parent financial company. The primary purpose of the BC work environment was to develop a physical space that enabled employees to attain the corporate vision, mission, and goals. The approach considered the relationship of space to strategy, business process, technology, culture, and the activities of work.

Its parent company traditionally experienced an environment with a high degree of individual work and low amounts of collaboration. This was clearly reflected in the typical space standards adopted long ago. However, senior management’s view of the new BC was high interaction and high autonomy. They also envisioned high-performance teams with higher levels of interaction, collaboration, and autonomy. (See Figure 19-9.)

The initial facility vision (a collaboration between Steelcase Envisioning™ and the interior design consultant) was that this group’s work processes and relationships would be best supported with task-based work settings. Forty-