

# Creative Space as a Catalyst for Organizational Change

**Keywords:** creative space; work environments; organizational culture; change processes

## 1. Workshop Organizers

Organizer Name	Email	Affiliation
Katja Thoring (Lead)	<a href="mailto:k.c.thoring@tudelft.nl">k.c.thoring@tudelft.nl</a>	TU Delft, The Netherlands
Roland M. Mueller	<a href="mailto:roland.mueller@hwr-berlin.de">roland.mueller@hwr-berlin.de</a>	Berlin School of Economics and Law, Germany
Alejandro Lecuna	<a href="mailto:alejandro.lecuna@htw-berlin.de">alejandro.lecuna@htw-berlin.de</a>	Berlin University of Applied Sciences for Engineering and Economics, Germany
Avo Schönbohm	<a href="mailto:avo.schoenbohm@hwr-berlin.de">avo.schoenbohm@hwr-berlin.de</a>	Berlin School of Economics and Law, Germany
Erik Bohemia	<a href="mailto:E.Bohemia@lboro.ac.uk">E.Bohemia@lboro.ac.uk</a>	Loughborough University London, UK

## Abstract

Creative spaces are becoming popular in many organizations. On the one hand, the design of the physical work environment might be able to actually foster creativity and facilitate innovation processes. On the other hand, the space represents a tangible indicator of a company's (innovation) culture. This workshop aims to explore the question how the spatial environment could represent or influence organizational culture. We invite the DRS community to reflect and analyse a given environment and to explore opportunities for changing the present culture through spatial design ideas. Provided analysis tools and a visual canvas will facilitate the team activities and can later be used by the participants to analyse and redesign their own work environments.

## 2. Context of Workshop

The topic of creative spaces has gained increased interest during the past years, which can

be inferred from the large number of published 'coffee-table books' on the subject, and from the success of innovative work environments in global companies, such as Google. The unique and peculiar design of work spaces has become some sort of recruitment factor for companies, because employees seem to favour such innovative work environments over traditional offices, especially in the so-called creative industries. Also, in the educational sector creative spaces have become popular and many design schools are hiring star architects to design their buildings, as, for example Zaha Hadid designed the Innovation Tower at PolyU Hong Kong. This phenomenon can be interpreted twofold: On the one hand, the implementation of such innovative work spaces can be used to express the existing organizational culture, while on the other hand these environments might be able to actually impact people's behaviour, work performance, and also the organization's culture (Miller, Casey, & Konchar, 2014). This workshop outlines the overall system of creative spaces (Thoring, Desmet, & Badke-Schaub, 2018) and provides participants with basic knowledge about the potential impact of the physical environment for cultural change within organizations.

### **3. Planned Activities and Expected Outcomes**

#### **Planned activities:**

The workshop starts with an introduction that outlines the theoretical background and our previous research on creative spaces, as well as an overview of different types of organizational culture. As a quick dive into the topic, participants will then jointly analyse the room the workshop takes place in, according to the presented parameters. The main workshop activity will be conducted in small groups. We will provide a set of analysis and design tools that consists of (1) a visual overview of different space types and qualities, (2) a collection with trigger questions to reflect on a given or envisioned environment, and (3) a visual canvas to analyse, sketch, and discuss spatial layout options (Thoring, Mueller, Badke-Schaub, & Desmet, 2017, 2016). With the help of the provided tools, the teams will develop ideas for improving the space with reference to provided themes that address possible organizational cultures.

#### **Expected Outcome:**

Participants will gain insights into the system's view of creative spaces, including the spatial parameters that could be adjusted in order to enforce an intended cultural change. As an outcome, participants will develop various spatial approaches to transform the same room to reflect different organizational mind-sets. The provided tools can be later used to analyse and redesign one's own work environments.

### **4. Intended Audience**

The workshop is suitable for up to 30 participants and addresses three different audiences:

- (1) Design practitioners from various organizations, who want to better understand and

possibly improve their work environments or change their organizational culture, in order to raise the attractiveness for current and future employees.

- (2) Design educators, who want to better understand and possibly improve their work and study environments or change their organizational culture, in order to raise the attractiveness for current and future students.
- (3) Design researchers, who are interested in or researching on the topic of creative spaces.

## **5. Length of Workshop**

We propose a workshop duration of 2 hours according to the following schedule:

- Introduction (typology of creative spaces, organizational culture): 20 minutes
- Space analysis (discussion): 10 minutes
- Team activities (redesign according to given spatial themes): 60 minutes
- Summary and wrap-up (discussion): 30 minutes

The 2 hours' workshop will allow any participant who is interested in the topic to gain insights into the potential of the physical environment for changing organizational culture.

## **6. Space and Equipment Required**

Required space:

- Studio space with flexible/moveable tables and chairs
- several small 'round tables' or group tables that accompany 5-6 people each
- for 30 participants a minimum of 6 such round tables would be required

Required equipment:

- Projector
- Whiteboard or pin board for each table/group (to mount large canvases, landscape format)
- Pictures and a rough floor plan of the assigned workshop room, sent to the organizers as early as possible (at least one week in advance.)

## **7. Potential Outputs**

After the conference we will provide a short paper (approximately 3–5 pages) including the theoretical background as well as pictures and exemplary outcomes from the workshop itself. This short paper would be distributed via email among the participants and could also be made available on the conference's website, if desired. The workshop will be utilized to create a community of people interested in or researching on the topic of creative spaces.

## References

- Miller, R., Casey, M., & Konchar, M. (2014). *Change Your Space, Change Your Culture: How Engaging Workspaces Lead to Transformation and Growth* (1st ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Thoring, K., Desmet, P., & Badke-Schaub, P. (2018). Creative environments for design education and practice: A typology of creative spaces. *Design Studies*, 56, 54–83. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.destud.2018.02.001>
- Thoring, K., Mueller, R. M., Badke-Schaub, P., & Desmet, P. (2016). Design the Campus: Introducing a Toolkit for Developing Creative Learning Spaces. In *Proceeding of the International Cumulus Association Conference* (pp. 358 – 368). Nottingham, UK.
- Thoring, K., Mueller, R. M., Badke-Schaub, P., & Desmet, P. (2017). A creative learning space development toolkit: empirical evaluation of a novel design method. In *Proceedings of the 21st International Conference on Engineering Design (ICED17)* (Vol. Design Education, pp. 245–254). Vancouver, Canada.

### About the Organizers:

**Katja Thoring** is full professor at Anhalt University of Applied Sciences in Dessau/Germany and Visiting Researcher at TU Delft, The Netherlands. She has a background in Industrial Design and researches on topics such as creative space, innovative research methods, and design thinking.

**Roland M. Mueller** is full professor at Berlin School of Economics and Law, Germany. He is an expert in Business Intelligence, Big Data, theory modelling, and lean design thinking.

**Alejandro Lecuna** is full professor for strategic design and design innovation at Berlin University of Applied Sciences for Engineering and Economics, Germany. He is chief design officer at several start-up companies and he regularly conducts workshops for global companies.

**Avo Schönbohm** is full professor at Berlin School of Economics and Law, Germany. His research focus is on change management, organizational culture, and gamification.

**Erik Bohemia** is a Programme Director at the Institute for Design Innovation, Loughborough University London, United Kingdom. Dr. Bohemia's current research explores changes associated with Globalisation and the impact of these changes on Design.