

Dedicated Offices in Coworking: A Workspace Trend Analysis

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Dedicated Offices in Coworking Spaces: Global Stats, Trends, and Drivers

Introduction: Coworking spaces have evolved from open-plan hubs for freelancers into diversified workplaces that increasingly cater to teams and companies of all sizes. A key shift in this evolution is the rise of *dedicated closed offices* (private, enclosed offices) within coworking centers. This report provides a detailed look at the prevalence of these private offices globally and regionally, how this mix has changed over time (especially before vs. after the COVID-19 pandemic), and workspaces. We draw on industry research and expert insights – including data from CBRE, JLL, IWG (Regus), WeWork, Cushman & Wakefield, Gensler, and others – to understand adoption patterns by company size and sector, the motivations behind opting for privacy in a collaborative environment, and the implications for coworking space design and operations. Visual data



(charts and tables) are included to illustrate key comparisons such as workspace configurations, pricing models, and occupancy rates. The findings are aimed at real estate professionals, corporate strategists, and workspace consultants seeking a comprehensive understanding of this trend.

Global and Regional Statistics: Dedicated vs. Open Coworking Spaces

https://www.optixapp.com/blog/coworking-trends/

Figure: Infographic highlighting the dramatic shift toward private offices in coworking. By 2025, an average of ~80% of coworking space is allocated to private (closed) offices, with only about 20% devoted to open seating areas (Source: optixapp.com). This marks a significant change from the early days of coworking, which were envisioned as predominantly open-plan communal spaces. Today, most coworking centers incorporate a mix of configurations, and the balance has tipped heavily in favor of enclosed offices. According to recent industry data, <a href="https://demand.com/dema

This shift becomes even clearer when compared to past surveys. Several years ago, open desks occupied a much larger share of coworking layouts. For example, Cushman & Wakefield data showed that the average coworking space circa late 2010s devoted about 50% of its layout to open desk areas (shared tables or hot desks), roughly 25% to meeting rooms, and the remaining 25% to other uses (including private offices and amenities) (Source: drop-desk.com). Around that time, just over half (51%) of coworking spaces worldwide offered private office spaces to their members (Source: drop-desk.com) – meaning it was common for a coworking hub to have at least a few lockable offices for teams, but those offices comprised a minority of total space. In newly opened coworking spaces, the proportion of area dedicated to private offices was as low as 18% on average in the first year of operation (Source: deskmag.com), with the majority of space being open and collaborative. Larger coworking centers did tend to include more private offices even then; a 2018 Global Coworking Survey found that in spaces with 100+ desks, private offices took up around 40% of the total space, while open workspaces accounted for only about 25% (the rest being lounges, event space, etc.) (Source: deskmag.com). These figures from the late 2010s indicate that even before the pandemic, there was a gradual shift underway toward more enclosed space in bigger coworking locations.



Fast-forward to the mid-2020s, and private offices have become the dominant space type in coworking centers globally (Source: optixapp.com). Industry observers note this as a response to sustained demand: operators report that open coworking areas often have patchy utilization, whereas private and semi-private offices see much stronger and more consistent uptake (Source: optixapp.com). In other words, members are voting with their feet (and wallets) in favor of privacy. As a result, the typical coworking facility in 2025 is effectively a suite of many small offices with a supporting layer of shared amenities, rather than one large communal bullpen. Regional market data supports this global trend while revealing some nuances:

- North America: Coworking spaces in the U.S. and Canada are often larger than elsewhere (averaging ~10,000–15,000 sq ft in the U.S. (Source: drop-desk.com)), enabling a mix of private suites and open areas. Even so, U.S. providers have heavily shifted toward private offices. WeWork, for example, derived the bulk of its membership growth from private office users, and by mid-2020 about 65% of WeWork's customers were large companies (often renting closed offices or suites rather than just individual desks) (Source: drop-desk.com). In Canada and the U.S., major operators like Industrious report that most new demand is for enclosed team spaces rather than open coworking seats (Source: cbre.com).
- **Europe:** Flex-space penetration in Europe is a few percent of total office stock (about 2.5% of office stock in 2023) (Source: <u>allwork.space</u>), but growing steadily. Many European coworking hubs provide upscale private offices to attract corporate users in cities like London, which has one of the world's highest flex-space shares (estimated ~10% of office stock) (Source: <u>optixapp.com</u>). In the U.K., there is a stark example of how pricing and occupancy reflect the demand for private offices: *in London, private offices in coworking average about £805 per desk per month, whereas in the rest of the U.K. they average around £379* per desk more than a 2x price difference (Source: <u>allwork.space</u>). Despite the cost, occupancy for those private offices remains high (London ~82% occupied, versus ~83% outside London) (Source: <u>allwork.space</u>), indicating robust demand even in the face of premium pricing. The table below illustrates this comparison, along with contract lengths:

image

Figure: Comparison of private office pricing and occupancy in London vs. the rest of the U.K. (2024). London private offices command much higher prices (averaging £805 per desk/month, +12% YoY) than elsewhere in the country (£379, +1% YoY), even as occupancy rates are roughly comparable in the low 80% range (Source: allwork.space). Notably, flexible space users in the U.K. are also committing for longer terms – the average contract length for flex offices has increased to about 15.6 months (up 27% year-on-year) (Source: allwork.space) (Source: allwork.space), signaling that companies view coworking/private suites as a viable longer-term solution rather than just a short stopgap.



- Asia-Pacific: The coworking market in APAC is the largest by number of centers, but individual spaces often operate on a smaller scale (average size in Asia is ~3,500 sq ft, versus much larger averages in the West) (Source: drop-desk.com). Given tighter real estate, Asian coworking spaces historically emphasized open hotdesking and dense layouts. However, even in APAC, providers like IWG/Regus and local operators have increasingly added private offices to cater to SMEs and satellite teams. By mid-2024, flexible office space across 20 major Asia-Pacific cities had grown to 89 million sq ft (about 4% of total Grade A office stock) (Source: allwork.space). This growth includes many small private suites and "micro-offices" within coworking centers, reflecting regional preferences for private concentrated work areas alongside shared amenities. Markets such as India are seeing surging demand for private managed offices, with coworking providers moving to acquire whole properties to create more closed office capacity (Source: allwork.space) (Source: allwork.space) (Source: allwork.space) (Source: allwork.space))
- Other Regions: In Latin America and Africa, coworking is also expanding, often led by demand from startups and remote workers. Latin America saw a 29% jump in flex workspace demand in 2023, for example (Source: <u>allwork.space</u>). While detailed layout stats are scarce, anecdotal evidence suggests that even in emerging coworking markets, private offices and lockable rooms (for teams or for client meetings) are key selling points due to cultural preferences for privacy and security in business settings.

In summary, across global regions the *majority of new coworking space supply is being delivered in the form of private offices or dedicated suites.* Open-plan coworking areas and hot desks still exist in nearly every space – they remain essential for freelancers, individuals, and fostering community – but they now typically occupy a much smaller footprint compared to enclosed offices. This inversion from the original coworking model is a defining characteristic of the modern flexible workspace industry (Source: <a href="majority optimal-potential-po

Trends Over Time: Pre- and Post-Pandemic Shifts in Demand

The balance between open and closed space in coworking, and the overall demand for flexible offices, have been significantly influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. **Before 2020**, coworking was one of the fastest-growing segments of real estate, albeit starting from a small base. Providers like WeWork, IWG (Regus), and numerous startups were expanding rapidly, fueled by freelancers, startups, and a growing trickle of corporate users. Pre-pandemic, the ethos of coworking emphasized **collaborative open environments** – the classic vision of people mingling at communal tables or in lounge areas (Source: optimages/com/). Nonetheless, even in this period, there was a **gradual uptick in demand for private offices** as companies began to use coworking centers as satellite offices or project spaces. By late 2019, large enterprises were already a notable part of coworking clientele (e.g. WeWork's)



enterprise membership was rising fast, and the average commitment term on WeWork's deals had nearly doubled from 8 months in 2017 to 15 months by mid-2019 as more mid-sized and large firms signed on) (Source: wework.com) (Source: wework.com).

2020: The Pandemic Impact. The COVID-19 outbreak delivered a sudden blow to the coworking sector. Lockdowns and health concerns caused occupancy to plummet virtually overnight in Q2 2020 (Source: hok.com). Many shared spaces were temporarily closed or operating at very reduced capacity. Global market revenue for coworking dipped sharply – for instance, estimates show the global coworking market contracted from ~\$9.3 billion in 2019 to ~\$8.2 billion in 2020 (Source: drop-desk.com) – a rare reversal in an industry that had been doubling in size every few years. The steep drop was primarily due to the abrupt shift to work-from-home and the hesitation of workers to use shared facilities during a health crisis (Source: hok.com). Occupancy in physical offices generally fell to extremely low levels in 2020, and coworking centers were no exception.

However, the pandemic also sowed the seeds for new workplace strategies. As companies and employees adjusted to remote and **hybrid work** models, many saw flexible office space as a way to balance these new preferences. By late 2020 and into 2021, demand began **rebounding**, especially for flexible solutions that could support distributed teams. Coworking and serviced office operators adapted by enhancing safety (spacing out desks, frequent cleaning, touchless tech) and by offering more private or enclosed options to address health concerns. Small *enclosed offices, partitioned workstations, and bookable meeting rooms* became hot commodities for those venturing back to a shared workplace, because they offered controlled environments within a communal setting (Source: <u>firmspace.com</u>) (Source: <u>firmspace.com</u>).

Post-2020 Recovery and Shifts: By mid-2021, leading operators reported a strong bounce-back in occupancy. The world's two largest coworking companies – WeWork and IWG – saw usage recover substantially from the nadir: WeWork's global occupancy rebounded to ~52% by mid-2021, and IWG's to ~69% (up from much lower levels in 2020) (Source: gcuc.co). Flexible space was, in fact, recovering faster than the traditional office sector. While conventional office buildings in 2021 were often only half occupied (weekly attendance ~50% of pre-pandemic levels), **coworking facilities were filling up at a comparatively higher rate**(Source: gcuc.co). Jacob Bates, head of flex space at JLL, noted that coworking centers' occupancy was "significantly higher than for traditional offices" as of late 2021 (Source: gcuc.co). This reflects how the **hybrid work trend** played out: instead of everyone returning to a single HQ, many companies allowed or encouraged employees to work remotely part-time and use flexible/co-working spaces as needed.

Crucially, preferences within coworking shifted in favor of more private space after 2020. Open-plan hotdesk areas, with densely packed seating, drew less interest in a time when people were conscious of distancing and noise from ubiquitous video calls. CBRE reported that large, open floorplans with rows of assigned desks have "drawn less interest," while collaboration areas and individual private



spaces (like pods or enclosed booths) have gained favor among flex occupiers in the post-pandemic era(Source: cbre.com). In practice, this meant coworking operators expanded offerings such as private offices for small teams, one-person enclosed pods, and reservable meeting rooms to accommodate the need for quiet, enclosed environments. The earlier statistic – ~80% of space now dedicated to private offices – is, in part, a direct outcome of these pandemic-era preference shifts (Source: optixapp.com).

Another notable trend post-COVID is the surge in **corporate use of coworking** as part of hybrid strategies. In mid-2021, a JLL survey found 41% of corporate office tenants expected to use more flexible office space as a result of the pandemic, up from 29% who said the same a year prior(Source: gcuc.co). By 2022–2023, many large companies had indeed acted on this: a third of companies globally were using some form of flex space in their portfolio, and 42% planned to accelerate investment in flex (often to help right-size their footprint and reduce costs) (Source: jll.com). For example, tech companies – which led the charge in hybrid work – have been big adopters: in a CBRE survey of tech firms, 36% said they planned to at least double their use of flexible office space by 2024 to support hybrid teams (Source: firmspace.com). This corporate demand tends to be oriented toward **private suites or customized areas** within coworking centers (rather than open seating memberships) so that companies can maintain their brand identity, security, and team cohesion.

The net effect of these shifts is that *flexible workspace has firmly entered the mainstream of office strategies*. Rather than being a niche or temporary solution, it's now seen as a core component of the future of work. Both JLL and Instant Group have projected strong growth ahead: by 2030, anywhere from **5% (conservative) to 30% (optimistic) of all office space could be "flex"** (coworking, serviced, or other flexible formats) (Source: optixapp.com) (Source: optixapp.com). Even the more cautious forecasts acknowledge a multi-fold increase from roughly ~2% of office stock flex today (Source: optixapp.com) (Source: allwork.space). This expansion is underpinned by the hybrid work paradigm – employees splitting time between home, headquarters, and third-party flex spaces.

In summary, the pandemic initially dealt a severe setback to coworking, but it also accelerated underlying trends that have since rejuvenated the sector in a new form. Coworking 2.0 has arrived, characterized by a greater emphasis on private, dedicated offices within shared facilities and by integration into corporate real estate strategies (Source: hok.com) (Source: hok.com). As one design firm noted, companies now embrace coworking as a vital element to balance remote and in-office work, and many are even incorporating coworking-style spaces within their own offices to offer employees more choice and flexibility (Source: hok.com). The overall outlook is optimistic: industry leaders assert that, despite headlines (e.g. WeWork's well-publicized financial troubles), flexible workspace is "the brightest spot of the office market" in 2024 (Source: cbre.com) and by most metrics is stronger now than it was in 2019 (Source: cbre.com). The next sections explore who is using these spaces and why – particularly focusing on the popularity of closed offices in a coworking context.



Adoption Patterns by Business Size and Sector

Coworking spaces have transcended their early adopter demographic and are now used by a broad spectrum of organizations – from one-person freelancers to Fortune 500 corporations. The preference for private or dedicated offices within coworking can vary based on **company size and industry sector**, as different types of businesses have distinct needs.

- Freelancers and Startups (Micro businesses): Independent professionals and very small startups were the original users of coworking. They often valued the open, collaborative atmosphere and low cost of entry (just a single desk membership). Many still do - freelancers remain the largest demographic in coworking globally (Source: drop-desk.com). However, even among these users there is interest in privacy at times (e.g. a freelancer might rent a single-person private office when needing quiet focus or client call space). Surveys show a majority of coworking spaces still provide open seating and shared lounges precisely to serve this group, but they complement it with phone booths or small offices that can be rented short-term for privacy (Source: optixapp.com). Startups and small teams (say 2-10 people) frequently reach a point where they want a room of their own. Coworking operators report that as soon as a startup grows past a couple of employees, moving from the communal table to a private office within the coworking center becomes a natural step - it allows the team to brainstorm behind closed doors, leave equipment safely overnight, and signal professionalism to visiting clients. This is reflected in industry stats: globally, about 64% of coworking spaces still have an open-plan layout for individual workstations (Source: drop-desk.com), but a growing share (51%+) also include private team offices in their offerings (Source: dropdesk.com), precisely to retain those startups as they scale. In cities like Dublin, for example, CBRE data shows that companies seeking small offices (for 25 desks or fewer) accounted for 82% of the flex space demand in the city - highlighting that the bulk of coworking uptake comes from small businesses and teams looking for enclosed space on flexible terms (Source: allwork.space).
- Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs): For established SMEs (say 10–100 employees), coworking offers a chance to avoid long leases and enjoy turnkey offices. These firms often opt for *private office suites within a coworking facility*, effectively using coworking as a serviced office provider. They may rent multiple private offices or a bespoke suite to house their whole team, sometimes even a whole floor if available. Key sectors here include technology start-ups, professional services, creative agencies, and nonprofits, which have been among the top users of coworking (Source: allwork.space)(Source: allwork.space). For instance, a 2024 industry report listed tech startups, entrepreneurs, creative industries (writers, designers), software developers, consultants, financial services, insurance, legal services, and nonprofits all among the top 10 industries using coworking (Source: allwork.space) (Source: allwork.space) a much more diverse set than a decade ago, when tech and creative fields dominated. Importantly, many of these professionals require privacy: consultants and lawyers handle sensitive client data, financial advisors need confidentiality, etc. As a



result, SMEs in such sectors show a strong preference for **dedicated offices or suites** in a coworking center rather than open desk plans. For example, a legal firm or a boutique finance company might choose a branded private office in a coworking hub so that they get a secure space with their firm's name on the door, while still benefiting from shared reception, meeting rooms, and communal lounges when needed. A survey by flexible office operator Servcorp notes that *private* offices are particularly suitable for client-facing businesses or those dealing with sensitive information (e.g. law, finance, consulting) because they offer greater control, confidentiality, and a professional image(Source: servcorp.com). Indeed, many attorneys and financial advisors have started using coworking centers (or serviced offices) as an alternative to traditional leases, but almost exclusively by renting enclosed offices that can lock – they gain flexibility and cost savings while meeting privacy requirements.

• Large Enterprises: Perhaps the most significant trend in recent years is the adoption of coworking (often rebranded as "flex space" or "flexible workspace") by large companies and corporations. Enterprises with hundreds or thousands of employees have become major customers of providers like WeWork, IWG, Industrious, and others. The majority of large enterprises utilizing coworking prefer private, secure spaces - essentially treating the coworking center as an extension of their corporate real estate. WeWork's evolution exemplifies this: in its early days (circa 2010-2015) WeWork's membership was dominated by startups and individuals, but by 2019-2020, enterprise clients (e.g. teams from Amazon, IBM, Microsoft, HSBC, etc.) made up more than half of its revenue (Source: wework.com). By June 2020, 65% of WeWork's customers were large companies rather than SMEs (Source: drop-desk.com). These corporate clients typically rent clusters of private offices or even whole customized suites/floors within WeWork locations. The appeal to big business is the ability to "plug and play" a fully furnished office for a project team or satellite branch without committing to long leases. They also use coworking to test new markets (open a small office in a city via coworking, see if it grows) and to provide regional touchdown spaces for remote employees. A CBRE survey in 2021 found that 69% of large companies (10,000+ employees) identified flexible office space as the most in-demand future "amenity" for their workforce (Source: gcuc.co) indicating that flexibility is now a strategic priority. Furthermore, 28% of large firms reported they were actively using flex space to handle uncertain headcount demand (basically, using coworking as overflow or swing space when they're not ready to commit to new leases) (Source: gcuc.co). Many Fortune 500 firms have signed partnership agreements with coworking operators (for example, IBM famously outsourced a chunk of its Manhattan offices to WeWork in 2017, and more recently, companies like Facebook, UBS, and BP have utilized flex providers for various teams). These enterprise users nearly always demand closed offices, dedicated team areas, or even private "enterprise floors" within a coworking site, to ensure security and brand identity. WeWork and others have created product lines for this (WeWork's "Headquarters by WeWork" or IWG's enterprise solutions) that give a large client a self-contained office with their branding, while the operator manages it. In practice, this means coworking centers in major cities might have entire sections that



look and function like a company's private office – the only hint of coworking is the shared reception or kitchen down the hall. This convergence is so pronounced that some analysts note *the line between "coworking space" and "serviced office" has blurred* for large users, with coworking companies essentially becoming outsourcing partners for corporate real estate (Source: hok.com).

• Sector-specific nuances: Certain industries have unique patterns. Tech firms (startups and big tech alike) were early adopters and remain heavy users of flex space - they appreciate the agility to grow/shrink and the modern amenities. Tech companies are typically comfortable with open collaborative spaces internally, but when using coworking, even they often choose private suites for proprietary work. Creative industries (design, media, advertising) value the community aspect of coworking but may still take private studios for their teams to allow personalization and creative freedom. Professional services (law, accounting, consulting) demand confidentiality, so when such firms use coworking, it's almost always via private offices or secure suites. It's noted that many small law firms and solo attorneys have moved into shared legal coworking hubs (or general coworking) to cut costs - but they use lockable offices and shared conference rooms rather than open desks (Source: myannapolisoffice.com) (Source: myannapolisoffice.com). Finance and Fintech companies also use flex space for small teams or innovation labs, but require strong security and often dedicated IT setups, again leaning to private suites. Government or healthcare teams occasionally use coworking for short-term projects or outreach offices, but usually behind closed doors due to data/privacy. Overall, while the coworking user base now spans virtually every sector from software to insurance to legal services(Source: allwork.space) (Source: allwork.space) - their common requirement when using shared spaces is often flexibility with privacy. This is why the core product of many coworking brands has shifted to private offices: it's the format that accommodates the widest range of business users.

To quantify these adoption patterns: small firms still account for the greatest number of coworking customers, but large firms account for a growing share of the area occupied. The trend of enterprise adoption is so strong that JLL's research indicates 42% of corporate occupiers plan to significantly increase use of flex space in the next three years (Source: jll.com). IWG (Regus) has stated that many enterprises are now adopting a "hub-and-spoke" model where the hub is a headquarters and the spokes are coworking locations closer to employees' homes – a strategy to support hybrid work and attract talent. This is reflected in the quote from IWG's CEO Mark Dixon: "There's this assumption that people like commuting into a central business district. They don't. It's a complete waste of time and money" (Source: businessinsider.com). His company is capitalizing on this by providing private offices in thousands of locations so that big employers can give staff an option to work nearer home. The war for talent has indeed made flexible working arrangements a perk; companies offering the ability to work from high-quality coworking offices a few days a week (instead of a long commute daily) have an edge in attracting and retaining employees. In a sense, coworking has become a tool for corporate agility and talent strategy, not just a freelancer niche.



Why Businesses Choose Closed Offices in Shared Workspaces

What drives businesses to opt for **closed private offices** within coworking spaces, as opposed to open coworking areas? Several key motivations consistently emerge, rooted in practical needs and strategic benefits:

- Privacy and Confidentiality: Perhaps the most obvious reason is the need for a controlled, private environment to conduct work. Many businesses deal with sensitive information whether it's client data, financial records, legal case files, or proprietary code. A closed office allows conversations and work to remain behind closed doors. In an open floor setting, phone calls or discussions can be overheard, which is unacceptable for industries like law, finance, or HR. As noted in an industry guide, private offices in coworking are ideal for businesses that require confidentiality, such as those handling sensitive data, because they ensure conversations and screens are not exposed to others (Source: servcorp.com). Enclosed offices also reduce noise bleed; professionals can conduct video conferences or calls without disturbing others or being disturbed. This became especially salient during the pandemic when video meetings soared freelancers and employees alike needed quiet rooms for Zoom calls, and coworking centers saw increased demand for private offices and bookable meeting rooms to serve that need (Source: firmspace.com). Privacy isn't just about secrecy; it's also about the ability to focus. Many people find they are more productive in a quiet, enclosed space free from the distractions of a busy common area. Thus, even creative teams will sometimes choose a private office simply to have better concentration and fewer interruptions.
- Security (Physical and IT): With privacy comes security. A lockable office provides a sense of security for belongings and equipment companies can leave computers, monitors, or important documents in the room overnight without worry. It also enables access control; only the team with the key/card can enter, reducing the risk of theft or unauthorized entry that might be possible in a completely open space. Moreover, many firms have compliance requirements (e.g., GDPR or HIPAA regulations, or corporate IT policies) that dictate a secure working environment. Coworking providers often equip private offices with additional security measures: Servcorp, for instance, emphasizes that its private offices have secure keycard access, 24/7 surveillance, and stringent data security protocols to protect business information(Source: servcorp.com) (Source: servcorp.com). Such measures give companies peace of mind that their data networks and conversations are secure in a way that couldn't be guaranteed at a communal desk. In sectors like finance or health, being in a lockable room may be necessary to meet audit and compliance standards. Even beyond intentional security, there's the aspect of health safety post-COVID, some individuals feel safer in a contained office (their "bubble") rather than sitting in an open desk farm, which initially drove some to upgrade to private offices.



- Branding and Professional Image: A private office within a coworking space can be branded and customized to reflect a company's identity - something not possible with a transient hot desk. Businesses often put up their logo, decorate the walls, and configure the layout to match their work style in a private office. This not only boosts team morale (feeling of having a "home" base) but also is important when hosting clients or recruits. It's hard to overstate the value of a professional-looking space: meeting a client at a coffee shop or noisy open coworking area is not ideal for many firms, whereas a dedicated office or conference room signals credibility. Coworking providers acknowledge this: WeWork notes that they encourage members to customize their private offices with their own branding so that "it's all them from day one," effectively making the coworking office indistinguishable from a traditional office in terms of look-and-feel (Source: wework.com)(Source: wework.com). Serviced office companies like Servcorp explicitly advertise that private offices offer branding opportunities and a prestigious business address, projecting a professional image particularly suited for client-facing businesses (Source: servcorp.com). For startups, having a private office can make a small company appear more established. For larger companies using flex space, branding the private suite helps integrate it with their corporate culture. In sum, closed offices allow businesses to maintain their brand identity and culture even while in a shared building.
- Focused Productivity and Team Collaboration: Closed offices strike a balance between seclusion and team collaboration. Within the four walls of their office, team members can freely discuss and brainstorm without worrying about disturbing outsiders (or leaking ideas). This is especially important for team cohesion a group working together in a private room can build its own microculture, decorate to motivate themselves, and huddle spontaneously. In an open coworking area, teams might have to whisper or book meeting rooms for every little discussion. Thus, companies choose private offices to boost internal productivity: there are fewer distractions from unrelated conversations or foot traffic, and they can arrange their desks or whiteboards in the optimal way. As one coworking executive put it, private offices in coworking "strike an equilibrium between seclusion and community" the team has a retreat for focus, but they can step out into common areas when they want interaction(Source: officeevolution.com). This flexibility is appealing under hybrid work models: an employee might come to a coworking site primarily to join their team in a private office for collaborative work that's hard to do over Zoom, then use the lounge or café area for a break or networking with others. So the closed office becomes a hub of intense productivity and team bonding, with the open areas as ancillary space.
- Hybrid Work Support and Distributed Teams: As mentioned earlier, hybrid work is a huge driver. Companies with employees spread across cities (or who are allowed to WFH part-time) often use coworking memberships to give those employees a place to gather occasionally. When they do gather, a private suite or office in a coworking center provides a controlled environment for that team's day together. It replicates the meeting rooms or team rooms they'd have at HQ. Moreover, for firms without a fixed office in a certain city, renting a private office in a coworking space is a quick



way to establish a presence and a touchdown spot for local staff. They choose a closed office so that the team in that city feels like they have a mini-headquarters, complete with their company sign on the door, rather than just a collection of random desks. This is tied to **talent attraction and retention**: offering employees the ability to work from a convenient location near them (in a quality workspace) is seen as a perk. For example, if a company's main office is in the suburbs but some employees live in the city, the company might rent a private room in a downtown coworking hub so those employees have the option of an office close to home. This flexibility can help retain talent who dislike long commutes. It also widens the recruitment pool – new hires in other regions can be accommodated by giving them access to a local coworking office rather than forcing a relocation. Surveys from IWG have highlighted that hybrid working (and by extension use of flex offices) is a key tool in the "war for talent," with 85% of businesses saying flexible working policies have improved employee retention and recruitment (Source: regus.com). The underlying reason employees appreciate it is the freedom to choose when and where to work – and a network of private offices in coworking centers gives them professional-grade "third places" besides home and HQ.

• Flexibility and Scalability (Operational Reasons): Although not specific to closed offices (it applies to coworking generally), it's worth noting that businesses often choose coworking precisely for the flexible lease terms. Private offices in coworking can usually be rented on monthly or shortterm agreements, allowing companies to scale up or down quickly. This is extremely valuable for startups who might double headcount in months, or for enterprises navigating uncertain economic conditions. The ability to easily expand into an adjacent office (if team grows) or to downsize by giving up a suite, without the penalties of breaking a conventional lease, is a major motivation. In fact, flexible private offices act as a pressure release valve for companies: if a company needs to hire 20 people in a new city ASAP, a coworking provider can immediately provide a furnished private suite for them (Source: wework.com) (Source: wework.com). Conversely, if a company has to cut back, they can relinquish the space after the short term. This agility is a financial and strategic benefit - as WeWork described, even big companies like the fact that they "won't be stuck with terms today that don't make sense tomorrow" and can reallocate space as needed(Source: wework.com)(Source: wework.com). Private offices make this practical because the unit of space is a contained module that can be rented or returned easily. This motivation, while about flexibility, reinforces choosing private offices over a bunch of open desks because offices allow a clearer allocation of space per team.

In essence, companies opt for closed offices in coworking to get the best of both worlds: the control, security, and identity of a private office combined with the flexibility, community, and amenities of a shared workspace. As a result, coworking operators explicitly market private offices highlighting exactly these benefits – privacy, security, focus, branding, and flexible terms. For example, one provider's guide contrasts the options: "Private Offices: Ideal for businesses needing privacy, enhanced security, confidentiality, customizable space and an undistracted environment; Coworking (Open Desks): Ideal



for those seeking collaboration, networking, cost-efficiency and a creative buzz" (Source: servcorp.com). Each business weighs these factors based on its priorities. Many find that the privacy and professionalism of a dedicated office is well worth the higher cost compared to an open desk membership, particularly when critical work or client impressions are on the line (Source: clio.com). The next section will look at how coworking providers and experts have responded to this demand, and how it influences design and operations.

Expert Commentary and Industry Insights

The trend toward more dedicated offices in coworking has been keenly observed by industry leaders, and their commentary provides context for how and why this shift is happening:

- Flexible Space as a Bright Spot: According to Enrico Sanna, CEO of The Office Group (a major UK flex-space operator), flexible workspace is currently "the brightest spot of the office market, without a doubt", even in the wake of challenges like WeWork's downsizing (Source: cbre.com). Jamie Hodari, CEO of Industrious (a U.S. coworking firm partnered with CBRE), echoes that sentiment, noting that by late 2023 "the flex industry...has never been stronger. Almost any operating or financial metric for a high quality provider is higher now than it was in 2019." (Source: cbre.com). These leaders credit a few factors: a secular shift toward flexibility in corporate real estate, increased acceptance of remote/hybrid work, and the ability of flex operators to adapt products to what users want namely private, flexible, high-service offices. In other words, demand has recovered and evolved, not disappeared.
- Rise of Private and Shared Offices: Kelly Kay, writing in Optix's 2025 coworking trends report, points out that private offices have become so popular that spaces are finding only "inconsistent success" with large open seating areas, but strong success with private and shared (team) offices(Source: optixapp.com). Many operators have acknowledged this in their product mix and financial planning. As mentioned earlier, some consultants advise that if a coworking business's finances aren't sustainable on private office income alone, it's a red flag (Source: optixapp.com). This shows how central the closed offices are to coworking's future a striking contrast to a decade ago when private offices were almost an afterthought in some spaces. WeWork itself addressed myths about flex space in 2019 to educate clients that flexible offices are not just for freelancers; it touted examples of Slack, Puma, and IBM as members and cited CBRE research on the rapid growth of flex space supply to emphasize that larger organizations benefit too (Source: wework.com) (Source: wework.com). WeWork's message was that enterprise usage was driving flex growth, implicitly highlighting private suites as the medium for that.



- User Preferences and Amenities: CBRE's Flexible Office and Occupancy surveys have consistently found that both individual users and companies value certain amenities highly in flex space. For example, wellness and "experience" rank very high nearly 80% of workers in return-to-work surveys say wellness amenities are a top demand(Source: gcuc.co). This ties into private offices because many companies see coworking centers as offering better amenities (gyms, lounges, cafes) than what they could in a small private lease. JLL's Head of Research, Scott Homa, noted that flex spaces add agility to portfolios and provide the right amenities in the right locations for distributed teams(Source: jll.com). Indeed, features like on-site fitness centers, coffee bars, and community events once luxuries are now baseline expectations, and coworking operators use them as differentiators. For hybrid workers who split time between home and a coworking office, these perks (and having a private office to store their gear) can make the difference in enticing them out of the house (Source: jll.com) (Source: jll.com).
- Hospitality & Service Focus: A repeated theme among experts is that coworking is increasingly about hospitality and user experience akin to a hotel. Chris Davies, CEO of Uncommon (a UK coworking brand), remarked that coworking operators are "in many ways, running hotels; we have desks not beds," and that a hospitality mindset is crucial for success(Source: optixapp.com). This is especially relevant as operators manage more private offices: each private office "tenant" expects a level of service (cleaning, reception, mail handling, IT support) much like a hotel guest or serviced office client would. The hospitality approach also means fostering a community even if people are in private rooms through events, common lounges, networking opportunities so that members feel part of something bigger than just a rented office. Gensler's workplace strategists have similarly pointed out that coworking's influence is leading companies to seek more experiential, hospitality-driven designs in their own offices (Source: hok.com) (Source: hok.com).
- Enterprise Real Estate Strategy: Both CBRE and JLL have published "future of work" studies highlighting flex space in corporate strategy. One notable forecast (often cited from JLL) was that 30% of all office space could be flexible by 2030(Source: gcuc.co) a figure sometimes debated, but indicative of the momentum. While JLL has scaled that back in some updates (Instant Group suggests ~5–10% is more realistic) (Source: optixapp.com), the direction is clear: corporates are not going back to 100% long-term leased, fixed offices. Many large landlords and brokers have embraced this trend by partnering with or investing in flex providers. For instance, CBRE took a large stake in Industrious, and Cushman & Wakefield invested in WeWork's restructuring. These moves show that traditional real estate players want a piece of the flex market, which they see as a growth area. CBRE's global surveys also found that over half of companies plan to incorporate flex space in their portfolio for the long term(Source: jll.com), citing uncertain demand and desire for agility. Christelle Bron, the head of CBRE's Americas agile practice, noted in late 2021 that coworking availability was getting tight in some markets as operators rebounded and even started expanding again (Source: gcuc.co) (e.g., dozens of new centers opened in late 2021 across U.S. and Canada).



That expansion trend continued – by 2024 there were nearly 42,000 coworking spaces globally (Source: <u>allwork.space</u>), and operators like IWG reported record revenues (IWG hit \$2.1 billion in the first half of 2024, a company high) as the hybrid wave drove demand (Source: <u>allwork.space</u>).

• WeWork's Cautionary Tale: It's impossible to discuss the industry without touching on WeWork's saga. HOK's research insightfully notes the paradox of coworking's growth versus WeWork's troubles: "At a time when many operators are reporting growth and increased profits, a company like WeWork...is facing an existential threat due to its financial structure and churn" (Source: hok.com). WeWork's near-bankruptcy in 2023 (now undergoing Chapter 11) serves as a reminder that while demand for flex space is high, business fundamentals must be sound. WeWork expanded with a heavy fixed-lease model that became unsustainable when the pandemic hit and occupancy dropped. Now, as the market recovers with more private office demand, WeWork is downsizing. Meanwhile, competitors with leaner models (franchise or management agreements) like IWG or boutique operators have thrived. Industry experts like Mark Dixon of IWG have commented that WeWork's issues are not reflective of the flex market's health overall (Source: cbre.com) (Source: cbre.com), and indeed many profitable coworking businesses exist. The takeaway for workspace strategists is that flex space is here to stay, but execution matters – location selection, product mix (lots of private offices), and financial prudence are key.

In summary, **expert voices uniformly affirm** the trend: flexible workspaces with private offices are a growing and now integral part of the office ecosystem. The motivations (talent, hybrid work, cost flexibility) are resonating at the C-suite level in companies, and coworking operators are adjusting design and services to meet those needs. The consensus is that the pandemic accelerated an already-growing preference for flexible, amenity-rich, and privacy-enabled work environments. As one CBRE podcast takeaway put it, *flex space within a building can even enhance that building's value* because it offers what modern tenants want (Source: cbre.com). The challenge and opportunity for operators is to capture that demand sustainably.

Design and Operational Implications for Coworking Operators

The dominance of dedicated private offices in coworking spaces is not just a market stat – it has profound implications on **how these spaces are designed, built, and run**. Coworking operators must balance providing privacy and security with maintaining the collaborative, community atmosphere that distinguishes coworking from a traditional office suite. Key implications include:

Space Layout and Density: With ~80% of space now often allocated to private offices (Source: optixapp.com), the physical layout of coworking centers has shifted. Floorplans that might once have been wide-open expanses with rows of desks are now partitioned into numerous small offices lining corridors. This reduces the overall density of people in a given area (since private offices with walls



and aisles consume more square footage per person than tightly packed open desks). It also changes sight-lines and acoustics – instead of a buzzy open floor, there are quieter enclosed pockets. To ensure the space still feels vibrant and not like a maze of cubicles, designers incorporate **open common areas as hubs**. In fact, over 75% of coworking spaces include central communal hubs or lounges for members to gather and interact(Source: drop-desk.com). These might be attractive kitchens, coffee bars, or coworking lounges with softer seating, deliberately placed as the heart of the space. The private offices often ring the perimeter (for natural light) while common areas sit centrally. This way, even if everyone has their own office, they cross paths in the hub and a sense of community can form. Additionally, many spaces use glass walls for private offices – this maintains some visual openness and access to daylight, while still providing acoustic privacy. It's a design tactic to prevent the space from feeling too claustrophobic or siloed.

- Balancing Community and Privacy: As highlighted by the Optix trend report, operators are figuring out "how to host private offices without turning it into the executive offices of the past" (Source: optixapp.com). The old executive-suite rental offices were often criticized as isolating and soulless. Coworking aims to avoid that by programming community events, fostering networking, and providing shared amenities. Even as more members sit behind closed doors, community managers play a role in introducing members to each other (e.g., via Slack channels, events, or even simply chatting in the hallway). Many coworking operators host weekly breakfasts, happy hours, or workshops in those communal areas to draw people out of their private rooms. The design facilitates this with event spaces or all-hands areas. About 80% of spaces host community events and 89% offer bookable meeting rooms to encourage interaction (Source: drop-desk.com). The key is to allow privacy when working, but ease of congregation when desired. Some newer designs include "office cluster + shared team space" models: for example, four private offices might share an anteroom lounge that is semi-private to those offices giving a mini-community feeling.
- Acoustics and Infrastructure: More walls mean more need for soundproofing and adequate ventilation. Each private office needs proper acoustic treatment so that conversations inside don't disturb neighbors (and vice versa). Many coworking spaces invest in higher-grade partitions, acoustic seals on doors, and white-noise systems to ensure confidentiality. Ventilation and HVAC must be designed to handle many enclosed rooms ensuring each gets airflow and doesn't overheat. This can increase fit-out costs compared to an open plan (where air can circulate freely). However, such investments are necessary to provide a quality experience in private offices, and operators have adjusted their build-out budgets accordingly, given the higher revenue per square foot that private offices generally bring in. Technologically, operators also wire each office for secure, high-speed internet (often VLANs or private networks for each office for security). The IT infrastructure has to accommodate both shared Wi-Fi for open areas and dedicated lines for offices that demand it. These are operational complexities behind the scenes.



- Scalability and Modular Design: Because demand can change, flexibility in design is valuable. Many coworking centers use demountable wall systems or movable partitions so they can reconfigure spaces as needed. For instance, if a large client wants a 10-person suite, walls between smaller offices can be removed to create a bigger one, or vice versa. According to Deskmag surveys, about 58% of coworking spaces use movable walls or furniture to allow reconfigurable layouts (Source: drop-desk.com). This modular approach is an operational strategy it allows the operator to adapt to market demands without major construction each time. It also means from a design standpoint, electrical and lighting layouts must anticipate these changes (e.g., having a grid of connections that can be accessed as walls move). Some spaces have pre-built "expansion joints" doors that can connect adjacent offices if one client takes both. The goal is to be able to offer a one-person office this month, and turn it into a two-room suite next month if needed, with minimal disruption.
- Amenity Spaces and Additional Services: With private offices taking a large chunk of floor area, operators have to use the remaining shared area wisely to provide amenities that justify the coworking premium. Common amenities include stocked kitchens, phone booths (for those in open area or even as extra quiet space for those in private offices if they have a guest), nap/ wellness rooms, printing stations, and informal meeting nooks. Many spaces also dedicate ~20–25% of space to meeting rooms and event spaces(Source: drop-desk.com), which are critical for both open and private office members. Meeting rooms allow private office users to host larger team meetings or client presentations outside their small office, and open area users to have any private meeting at all. Post-pandemic, there's also more attention to outdoor space (terraces or rooftop areas) and health-oriented features (touchless entry, ample sanitation). Operators have found that offering a variety of work settings (café area, library-quiet area, phone booths, collaboration rooms) is part of the appeal, even if someone primarily works from their private office. It gives them the choice to step out and work from the lounge for a change, for example. Approximately 60% of coworking spaces incorporate biophilic elements like plants and natural light to improve ambiance (Source: drop-desk.com), recognizing that design can impact wellbeing and satisfaction.
- Operational Complexity "Running a Hotel": With many private offices essentially functioning like individual leased premises, the operational load on coworking staff increases. Community managers now juggle multiple corporate accounts, each with potentially different needs (e.g., one company might want a dedicated VLAN, another might require nightly locking of their office, another requests a custom furniture layout). This is more complex than a generic open coworking setup where everyone uses the space the same way. Coworking operators have responded by beefing up their hospitality and account management. WeWork and others assign account managers to larger clients to handle their requirements. Day to day, staff are tasked with ensuring mail is delivered to each private office, cleaning crews can access offices (often after hours or with permission), and that each office tenant's IT is functioning securely. On the flip side, private offices can bring more



stable revenue (often with 6-12+ month commitments) versus month-to-month hot-deskers, which helps operations planning. Many operators have reported improving profitability as they optimize these processes. In 2023, about 46% of coworking spaces were profitable (up from earlier years) (Source: optixapp.com), and the average profit margin was around 20% (Source: optixapp.com) – a sign that operators have learned to manage the costs and revenues of private-offices-heavy models effectively.

- Revenue Streams and Pricing Models: The emphasis on private offices has also led operators to diversify revenue streams. Since private offices typically command higher fees, some spaces have reduced reliance on day-pass or hot-desk income. As noted in Optix's report, desk rentals and combined memberships made up 56% of coworking revenue in 2016, but only 38% by 2023(Source: optixapp.com) - meaning a lot more revenue now comes from offices and other services. Operators have introduced tiered pricing: e.g., standard private office vs. premium private office (better view or larger size) at different rates. They also monetize meeting rooms (often charging even private office members a fee per hour to use larger conference rooms) and virtual office services (mail handling for clients who just need an address). In fact, virtual offices and services like event space rental have become key ancillary revenue streams (Source: optixapp.com)(Source: optixapp.com). This means operationally, staff might be handling events management or virtual client mail forwarding, roles that weren't as prominent before. The business model now looks more like a hybrid of hospitality and serviced office: multiple income lines (office rental, meeting room bookings, virtual memberships, even catering or concierge services) contribute to the bottom line. This complexity requires good management software and training, which is why many spaces invest in management platforms (like Nexudus, OfficeRnD, etc.) to keep track of it all.
- Impacts on Traditional Landlords and Design Firms: Lastly, the prevalence of private offices in flex spaces has influenced the wider office market. Landlords are now sometimes designing *spec suites* (pre-built small office units) in their buildings to mimic coworking offerings, and some partner with coworking brands to run flex floors. Design firms like Gensler and HOK advise clients to include flexible, coworking-like areas in new office buildings to attract tenants (Source: hok.com). This might include a floor of ready-to-use small offices and a shared lounge that the landlord operates (basically an in-house coworking space). The success of the coworking model with private offices has demonstrated that many end-users desire smaller, ready-to-go, private spaces so real estate is adjusting to supply that either through coworking providers or directly.

In conclusion, the coworking industry's gravitation toward dedicated offices has transformed both the **physical design** and **operational playbook** of shared workspaces. Coworking operators must now be adept at creating environments that offer the privacy, security, and customization of traditional offices *within* a communal, flexible framework. Those that succeed effectively run a **hybrid model**: part community center, part serviced office. As the industry matures, we can expect further innovation in marrying these elements – for example, smarter use of technology to allow frictionless booking of space,



or layouts that can morph more easily from open to closed and back. The enduring takeaway for real estate and workplace professionals is that demand for flexibility and privacy is shaping the future of offices. Coworking spaces, once synonymous with open-plan desks, have proven adaptable to these demands – evolving into multi-faceted workplaces that cater to solo entrepreneurs and global enterprises alike, all under one roof. The continued growth and high utilization of private offices in coworking show that businesses have embraced this model as a compelling solution in the new world of work (Source: cbre.com)(Source: gcuc.co).

Sources:

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Tags: coworking, private office, flexible workspace, commercial real estate, workspace design, real estate trends, hybrid work

About 2727 Coworking

2727 Coworking is a vibrant and thoughtfully designed workspace ideally situated along the picturesque Lachine Canal in Montreal's trendy Griffintown neighborhood. Just steps away from the renowned Atwater Market, members can enjoy scenic canal views and relaxing green-space walks during their breaks.

Accessibility is excellent, boasting an impressive 88 Walk Score, 83 Transit Score, and a perfect 96 Bike Score, making it a "Biker's Paradise". The location is further enhanced by being just 100 meters from the Charlevoix metro station, ensuring a quick, convenient, and weather-proof commute for members and their clients.

The workspace is designed with flexibility and productivity in mind, offering 24/7 secure access—perfect for global teams and night owls. Connectivity is top-tier, with gigabit fibre internet providing fast, low-latency connections ideal for developers, streamers, and virtual meetings. Members can choose from a versatile workspace menu tailored to various budgets, ranging from hot-desks at \$300 to dedicated desks at \$450 and private offices accommodating 1–10 people priced from \$600 to \$3,000+. Day passes are competitively priced at \$40.

2727 Coworking goes beyond standard offerings by including access to a fully-equipped, 9-seat conference room at no additional charge. Privacy needs are met with dedicated phone booths, while ergonomically designed offices featuring floor-to-ceiling windows, natural wood accents, and abundant greenery foster wellness and productivity.

Amenities abound, including a fully-stocked kitchen with unlimited specialty coffee, tea, and filtered water. Cyclists, runners, and fitness enthusiasts benefit from on-site showers and bike racks, encouraging an ecoconscious commute and active lifestyle. The pet-friendly policy warmly welcomes furry companions, adding to the inclusive and vibrant community atmosphere.

Members enjoy additional perks like outdoor terraces and easy access to canal parks, ideal for mindfulness breaks or casual meetings. Dedicated lockers, mailbox services, comprehensive printing and scanning facilities, and a variety of office supplies and AV gear ensure convenience and efficiency. Safety and security are prioritized through barrier-free access, CCTV surveillance, alarm systems, regular disinfection protocols, and after-hours security.

The workspace boasts exceptional customer satisfaction, reflected in its stellar ratings—5.0/5 on Coworker, 4.9/5 on Google, and 4.7/5 on LiquidSpace—alongside glowing testimonials praising its calm environment, immaculate cleanliness, ergonomic furniture, and attentive staff. The bilingual environment further complements Montreal's cosmopolitan business landscape.

Networking is organically encouraged through an open-concept design, regular community events, and informal networking opportunities in shared spaces and a sun-drenched lounge area facing the canal. Additionally, the building hosts a retail café and provides convenient proximity to gourmet eats at Atwater Market and recreational activities such as kayaking along the stunning canal boardwalk.



Flexible month-to-month terms and transparent online booking streamline scalability for growing startups, with suites available for up to 12 desks to accommodate future expansion effortlessly. Recognized as one of Montreal's top coworking spaces, 2727 Coworking enjoys broad visibility across major platforms including Coworker, LiquidSpace, CoworkingCafe, and Office Hub, underscoring its credibility and popularity in the market.

Overall, 2727 Coworking combines convenience, luxury, productivity, community, and flexibility, creating an ideal workspace tailored to modern professionals and innovative teams.

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