The 2008 Gensler Workplace Survey contributes new insight into the day-to-day knowledge workplace activities that generate economic value and produce business success: four work modes—focus, collaborate, learn, and socialize—that allow the creative and innovative power of people to be fully realized.

EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE DESIGN DIRECTLY CORRELATES TO IMPROVED BUSINESS PERFORMANCE.

As WPI scores rise, the three-year profit average of companies increases, hitting 28.2% at the highest levels, more than 14% higher than the lowest WPI scores and 7% higher than the next-best set of WPI scores.

Financial performance is unquestionably the cornerstone of measuring business success. In the knowledge economy, corporate profitability and growth are driven more by organizational capabilities than by control over physical assets. This is reflected in IBM’s 2008 global CEO study where market factors and people factors were rated equally as the top drivers affecting businesses. Additional factors including market leadership, innovation, brand, employee engagement and other human capital factors, create a multi-dimensional bottom line that drives profit and revenue strength.

Even average companies do better profit-wise when their workplace scores go up. Average companies with a WPI of 72% show profit growth of 18% versus 16% at companies with a 12-point lower WPI.

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SUCCESS IN A KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY MEANS WORKING DIFFERENTLY.

Through our research and project experience, Gensler has established a key connecting point for all knowledge economy companies, from consumer products to law firms, accounting, media, entertainment or manufacturing. Four work modes—focus, collaborate, learn and socialize—are the shared language of knowledge economy workplaces, and are central to our 2008 survey research.

Our findings show a picture of the knowledge workplace that is filled with varied and dynamic interactions and not just long hours of solitary work—collaborating, learning, and socializing are as important to individual job performance as focus work. Employees at top-performing companies not only spend more time collaborating and learning, they consider that time more critical to job success than do their peers at average companies, who are still focus work-centered.

LEARNING IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT TO TOP COMPANIES
Learning is 80% more critical to job success at top-performing companies than at average companies, who spend nearly three-quarters less time learning.

TOP-PERFORMING COMPANIES VALUE SOCIALIZING
Overturning the notion that socializing is a time-waster rather than a business asset, top-ranked companies socialize 16% more than average companies. Further, they consider it almost three times more critical than average companies, the largest gap among all of these work mode comparisons.

TOP COMPANIES COLLABORATE MORE
Top-performing companies collaborate 25% more than average companies and consider collaboration more than twice as critical to job success.

TOP-PERFORMING COMPANIES DESIGN MORE EFFECTIVE WORKPLACES TO SUPPORT ALL WORK MODES.

Our findings clearly show that top-ranked companies do a better job helping their people perform at higher levels by designing effective workplaces that allow people to spend higher-quality time in the work modes that matter most to their job success, with up to 23% higher effectiveness ratings for work modes and 13% greater for specific work spaces.

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THE WORKPLACE PERFORMANCE INDEX

Gensler created the Workplace Performance Index to help clients understand specifically what comprises space effectiveness or ineffectiveness in their workplaces so that design solutions can fully align with their needs. The WPI is a web-enabled pre-and post-occupancy evaluation tool that creates an index based on work mode criticality and time spent, as well as the quality of individual attributes of each type of work space such as layout, airlight quality, storage, furniture, privacy/access and other factors. The 2008 Workplace Survey responses are now part of Gensler’s national database used to provide clients with comparative information for decisionmaking purposes.

The WPI score for all survey respondents is 58%—just over the halfway mark. Separating top-ranked companies from average shows a 16-point gap in WPI score, with top companies at 80%.