

# The New Workplace Imperative: A Call to Action for Business, the Environment and People

## Mobility Now

The new workplace imperative has been evolving over the last fifteen years. Work became untethered to a specific location and began to be performed in all sorts of places outside of the traditional office building. The business drivers include employees' new expectations of the workplace, mature technology, embracement of sustainable practices for real estate, an increase in global competition and, most recently, the economic recession.

The concept of mobility as a work style in which a person can choose to use multiple spaces and places to do their work is a well established, ever-evolving work practice. Initially known as telework or telecommuting, morphing into "work from home," and continuing to evolve under such terms as "alternative" or "distributed workplace strategies," this work practice is part of an accelerating series of advances in tools and technologies that add worker choice to the workplace. In some cases, however, it is not about choice. If you are part of a global project team, you do not go back to the office to make that midnight call to Australia, but do it from the comfort of your home, hotel or local café – wherever you happen to be. Work is where people are – not where the office is located.

## The Business Case for Mobility

There are three primary arguments for why mobility should be implemented: 1) it's a good business decision, 2) it's a good environmental decision, and 3) it's a good decision for attracting and retaining workers. Depending on the internal audience that must be convinced, the culture of the company and its evolutionary maturity, one or a combination of the three following cases can be made.

### Imperative I: Mobility is Good Business

First and foremost, the decision to implement a mobility program is a business decision. American companies spend an average of \$8,500 per year<sup>1</sup> to house a person in a dedicated workstation or office. That's rent; heating, lighting, air conditioning; maintenance; security; insurance, etc. But at any given time, 50% of those people are not sitting in their seats. They're working, but they're working somewhere else. They're in a conference room or another building, at a client's site, in training, etc. So while they're working, their dedicated workspace is sitting empty and idle. A simple calculation shows that at \$8,500 a year per workstation, and 1/2 are empty, a company is spending \$4,250 more per worker per year than they need to spend to accommodate a work style that no longer exists. Even if these numbers are off by half, that's still an additional \$2,000+ per worker that a company could send to the bottom line, use to curtail layoffs or invest in research and sales.

New Business Realities	
Used to Be:	Now:
Markets are local	Markets are global
Talent is who's willing to move to HQ	Talent is global
Workforce is within hour drive of office	Workforce is widely dispersed
Single office location	Work locations are multiple
Work is linear & manufacturing based	Work is knowledge based
Work is individually goaled	Work is team-dependent
Major work constraint is space	Major work constraint is time
Cost is an issue	Cost is an even bigger issue

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<sup>1</sup> International Facility Management Association, 2008

### **Imperative 2: Mobility is Good for the Environment**

A well designed mobility program can have a significantly positive impact on the environment. Enabling employees to work where they need to work instead of commuting to a predetermined location reduces the consumption of resources and reduces the amount of the environmentally negative byproducts of needless travel. At an individual level, employees can save time, money and wear-and-tear on vehicles by commuting only when it makes sense.

The US Green Building Council says that in the US, buildings consume significant percentages of our most precious resources: water and electrical energy. And the operation of these buildings also generates an even larger portion of greenhouse gases and materials that flow into our waste streams.

### **Imperative 3: Mobility is Good for People**

Mobility is about enabling workers to choose where and when they are most productive. Allowing employees this choice (a) attracts and retains the best talent and (b) makes workers more productive. When seeking to attract and retain top talent, employers offer salary and working conditions that meet the desires of top candidates. Studies have shown that when given a choice, as the most qualified job seekers have been given, they choose working conditions that give them flexibility so they can make decisions on how to balance their work and personal lives.

## **A Call to Action**

The fact of the matter is that people are already working this way. Technology like cell phones, laptops and ubiquitous, secure broadband networks enable people to work from anywhere. But companies are still paying for their vacant workstations while their people are being productive elsewhere. That costs organizations everywhere billions of dollars per year. The following steps are the core elements for creating a mobility program.

1. Get data by implementing a corporate real estate and facility management database, like Manhattan's Integrated Workplace Management System (IWMS).
2. Get educated about all aspects of mobility.
3. Get the HR, IT and CRE Teams Together.
4. Get started with a formal mobility program.

## **A Final Word**

This paper offers a focused, fact-based glimpse into the potential for mobility in the North American and European workplace. To maintain focus, many issues have been left untouched in this paper; issues like change management, e-learning, robust global interconnections, the tracking of actual space utilization, and studies about workplace interactions and how they are changing. We encourage readers whose interests were piqued by this paper to seek out and follow some of the many front-edge thinkers who are doing great work in the mobility space, contact Group 5 ([www.group5consulting.com](http://www.group5consulting.com)) or Manhattan Software ([www.manhattansoftware.com](http://www.manhattansoftware.com)) today.

**To download the full-length paper, please visit [usa.manhattansoftware.com/mobility](http://usa.manhattansoftware.com/mobility).**

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#### **About Group 5**

Group 5 Consulting, Inc helps organizations move their work forces to a mobile work practice with expertise in technology, change management, program design and new work practices. G5's practical, business-focused, get-it-done approach helps organizations quickly realize the cost savings, sustainability and human capital benefits of mobility. Their collaborative approach ensures that the mobility program fits the business drivers and uses existing systems and processes as much as possible, modifying as needed, and developing any missing components. G5 brings a set of processes and tools honed by years of experience and in-the-trenches challenges. Their approach is practical, informed by not only designing successful mobility programs, but by years of implementing, measuring, and managing them.

#### **About Manhattan Software, Inc.**

Manhattan Software is the #1 global full service corporate real estate, facility management, property management and enterprise asset management software company. Manhattan is focused on creating competitive advantage for its clients. Manhattan Software offers two product suites: Manhattan, an Integrated Workplace Management Solution (IWMS) and CenterStone, the leading facility management software product. As an integrated suite of products, Manhattan improves clients' performance by enabling seamless management of all aspects of their real estate operations and portfolio. Manhattan is an advanced, web-based real estate lifecycle solution that readily integrates into an organization's existing infrastructure.