Let’s look at trends in space use and how those changes in space use have affected how space is measured and benchmarked.

**What is Benchmarking?** Benchmarking and how is it used varies amongst organizations and customers. Like any baseline survey, how it is used is dependent on what questions need to be asked. At Jacobs, benchmarking is not a solution nor a prescription but a baseline measurement or concept from which a project and its successes can be measured.

Benchmarking is both quantitative and qualitative. Space metric analysis includes not only a client’s space utilization but also space is allocation and alignment with the business drivers of an organization. Metrics can then be compared to industry best practices and most admired peer organizations to understand what strategy to implement to support the mission and vision or an organization.

Benchmarking and metric goals may be part of a project’s key performance indicators along with other project goals for recruitment and retention, employee engagement, and satisfaction.

**How do we gather data?**

Our workplace team has been gathering and measuring both quantitative and qualitative benchmark data for over twenty years.

For quantitative metrics, the primary and historical method of space measurement has been BOMA 1996. BOMA revised space measurement definitions in 2010. We have continued to measure using 1996 definitions for consistency.

**What are the different types of information that we gather and track?** Both quantitative and qualitative information is documented. Many different types of metrics can be tracked but specifically Jacob’s focuses on space measurement (Gross Square Feet, Usable Square Feet), collaborative areas and seats (number of conference seats, huddle rooms and open collaborative seats) as well Amenity Spaces. Attributes of these space types and how they are integrated into the overall strategy are key to long term understanding of a project and its success.

**How do we use this information in our projects and for our clients?** Jacobs uses this information to build macro programs for new projects. We assess and analyze existing client sites to our data base and best practice methodologies to see how they measure up. This becomes the starting point for programming and design.

**What are the trends we are seeing?** During the last database update, specific trends began to emerge. The top ten trends that we identified were:
10. How we measure space is changing due to activity based work environments and mobility programs. Historically, space has been allocated per person due to assigned individual spaces but as more organizations move towards mobility programs, space is being measure per seat and can include not only individual seats but collaborative as well. All seats can be used for work.

9. Square Footage per person continues to contract. We have continued to see a decline in the amount of space dedicated to people. Our recently updated metrics show that in the past 2 to 3 years alone, gross square feet has reduced by 15% and usable square feet by 12%.

8. Individual space continues to be downsized. As corporate America has moved to reduced real estate (vs. ‘optimize’), less space is being dedicated to individuals and more to collaborative seats. Our metrics show that private offices have shrunk by 15% in the past 5 years and workstations by 14%.

7. Many organizations are reducing the number of private offices or foregoing them altogether.

6. The number of collaborative seats stabilizes compared to years past when the need for collaborative seats increased exponentially. We are finding that organizations still utilizing assigned seats are providing approximately 1 seat per 2 employees. As mobility and activity based work place increases, so does the number of collaborative seats.

5. The number of huddle rooms increases to meet team needs for impromptu meetings and team space.

4. The number of Quiet/Phone/Focus rooms increases to support the need for focus work.

3. Organizations are integrating quiet zones in addition to quiet rooms. Think of the quiet car or university library. Everyone understands the protocols and abide by them (most of the time!)

2. Amenity space is important and organizations continue to provide amenities for employees even as space allocated to individual space as decreased. Amenity spaces are seen as an alternate work place and speak to employee engagement, recruitment and retention.

1. Cost is still reported as the number one reason to change or reduce space by facilities managers and real estate directors. This differs from senior leader vision of changing space to change culture and work processes. We need to move from space reduction to optimization.

What are the latest trends and how are we tracking? Benchmarking metrics have only recently addressed activity based workplace and mobility. Historically, spaces were measured as square feet per person. But with the activity based model sf can be assigned per all seats, staff seats etc. This challenges the historical model of USF/person and I space to We space.
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