

# VAN Radar 2019

## Perspective session summary

### Session: Ten workplace hacks to improve productivity

#### Presenter: Anthony Henry, Macquarie

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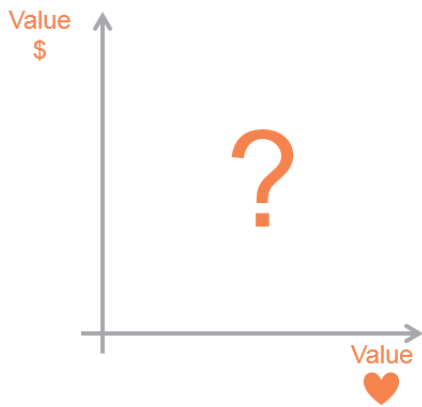
What can a well-planned office space provide? It can inspire a sense of community, bring colleagues together and make clients feel comfortable. That sense of connectedness is important and can be leveraged to improve productivity in your business.

Workplace experience impacts how we feel, think and act. A positive impact reinforces culture, drives engagement and improves business performance.

1. **Give staff permission to hack their workspace and mould it to their needs.** Be comfortable with staff suggestions about space. Let them own it.
2. **Think about 'functional inconvenience'.** This is a concept developed by Steve Jobs to bring people to a common space: kitchens, coffee machines – even toilets. Studies found that if people are sitting more than 10 metres away from each other, they start to email, rather than get up to talk. Often, people on separate floors don't engage with each other at all. So build in opportunities for people to move around and bump into each other. In the process, make people use the stairs to improve fitness and wellbeing.
3. **Remember the 'popcorn principle':** create a snack area. Food is the glue that brings people together. This can be as significant as designing a food court that people need to pass through (like a kitchen at home), as casual as introducing a fortnightly staff barbeque, or as easy as buying chocolate and sharing out in the afternoon.
4. **Introduce meeting pods.** These are like phone boxes: small spaces for privacy and intimacy are powerful.
5. **Have a great reception area.** Get this right for clients and it provides a memorable experience. Employ someone that can bring your brand to life. As an example, Saatchi & Saatchi once employed a guitar player at reception.
6. **Use animals to generate warm responses** from staff and clients.
7. **Never underestimate the importance of toilets.** Toilets provide refuge, and privacy. Make them more welcoming: provide personal hygiene products in the bathrooms or play music.
8. **Invest in booths.** The booth is the favourite open meeting space – protected on the sides so nobody can come up behind and with a table in-between
9. **Provide green spaces.** Get closer to nature. Fresh air and natural light are hugely important.

10. **Map your employee experience.** Watch, and ask them and think about how to support them inside and out of the office. It doesn't have to be expensive. For instance, providing stools to pull out while talking with colleagues at their workstation – instead of leaning on desks, or standing over them – can be a \$200 Ikea solution.

When deciding on what will work best for your firm, ensure that it aligns with your value proposition.



*Anthony Henry is the Head of Workplace Design at Macquarie Group.*