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## WORKSCAPES: CREATING COMMUNITIES

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As the workplace continues to evolve, the question is no longer simply how we design space, but how we design connection. At Workspace Design Show London, held in February 2026 at the Business Design Centre, our theme for this year, 'Connected Realities', explored exactly this. Community in the workplace is shaped by the intersection of physical space, digital infrastructure and human experience. Today's organisations are navigating hybrid models, shifting cultural expectations and new definitions of productivity. In response, designers and occupiers are reimagining workplaces as destinations that foster belonging, collaboration and shared purpose. We brought together architects, designers, developers, consultants and end users to exchange ideas, challenge thinking and explore solutions that strengthen workplace communities. Through curated installations, material innovation and four dedicated conference streams, we created a platform where conversation becomes collaboration. For us, community does not only describe the workplaces we discuss; it defines the event itself. The show is a meeting point for the industry, a space where meaningful dialogue happens face to face, and where the future of workplace culture is shaped collectively.

Creating a community at work does not rely on organized activities or scheduled events; rather, it is rooted in an approach to everyday luxury that is subtle and authentic. We believe that community is built through the almost silent daily experience employees live within their environment. A community takes form when employees feel that their workplace has a soul, an intention, a coherence that brings them together without the need to formally convene them. The spaces themselves, and the ways they are designed to be used, become the true catalysts for connection. For me, everything begins with design. A well-designed space tells a shared story: it invites encounters, sparks curiosity, and fosters enriching exchanges. It is these micro-interactions that weave the strongest bonds. A layout thoughtfully conceived down to the smallest detail can transform everyday experience and positively influence our social behaviors. Natural light, fluid circulation, and the choice of colors also play a major role in shaping the atmosphere. Design therefore becomes far more than a matter of aesthetics; it shapes the way we live together and encourages the creation of lasting memories within a company.

The modern office is an ecosystem: we need to abandon the classic model of a furnished environment and consider the workspace as a living entity that interacts with people, light, shapes, and movement. The office ecosystem is characterized by the interdependence of design and functionality: physical spaces become fluid and adaptable, with open spaces, concentration zones, social areas, and coworking areas responding to different needs, promoting dialogue and innovation. Digital technologies act as vital connectors, ensuring business continuity even in hybrid contexts, where the boundary between presence and distance dissolves. The workspace must be rethought as an activator of an ecosystem of relationships, which are reactivated and protected here. The lines of this new geography of being together and sharing space have been traced in the Dolomite office furniture system for Estel which, like a complete universe in itself, consists of desks, bookcases, meeting tables, and solutions for break areas. A dynamic approach to work for the overall well-being of the individual, in a more natural and stimulating environment.

At Ippolito Fleitz Group, we understand workplace not as a composition of objects, but as a framework for relationships. A successful workplace makes an organization visible. Leadership, structure, vision, and identity are translated into spatial experience. People immediately sense whether these dimensions are aligned. If behavior contradicts atmosphere, the inconsistency is felt. Community emerges only when space and culture form a coherent whole. We see the workplace as a space of opportunity rather than prescription. It should not dictate how people work, but enable them to choose how they engage, collaborate, withdraw, or experiment. Such environments empower users to respond to changing demands with autonomy and responsibility. Flexibility here is not a stylistic gesture, but an expression of trust. The workplace should enable what cannot happen in isolation: encounter, exchange, shared reflection, and unexpected conversation. In times of rapid transformation, it can provide orientation and psychological safety. Belonging develops when people recognize why they are there and how they can grow. When space supports respectful interaction and shared purpose, it becomes more than infrastructure. It becomes a credible expression of who we are together.