

The New Office Playbook

10 things to get right when you open a new office

Opening a new office means managing a lot of change at once: new space, new amenities, new ways of working, and often new mandates. Most of these decisions are expensive and hard to reverse. And most workplace leaders have to make them without an existing playbook.

Whether you're moving from one office to another, consolidating spaces, or opening a new HQ, this guide shares 10 practical lessons from the field to help you handle the challenges you may face and make the transition smooth and successful. The goal throughout: set the space up so people can find and use the right places from day one, roll out the right tools to support employees in meeting your mandates, policies, and workplace concepts, and put the office and infrastructure in place so you can measure and improve spaces and policies afterward—ensuring you get the most out of your investment.

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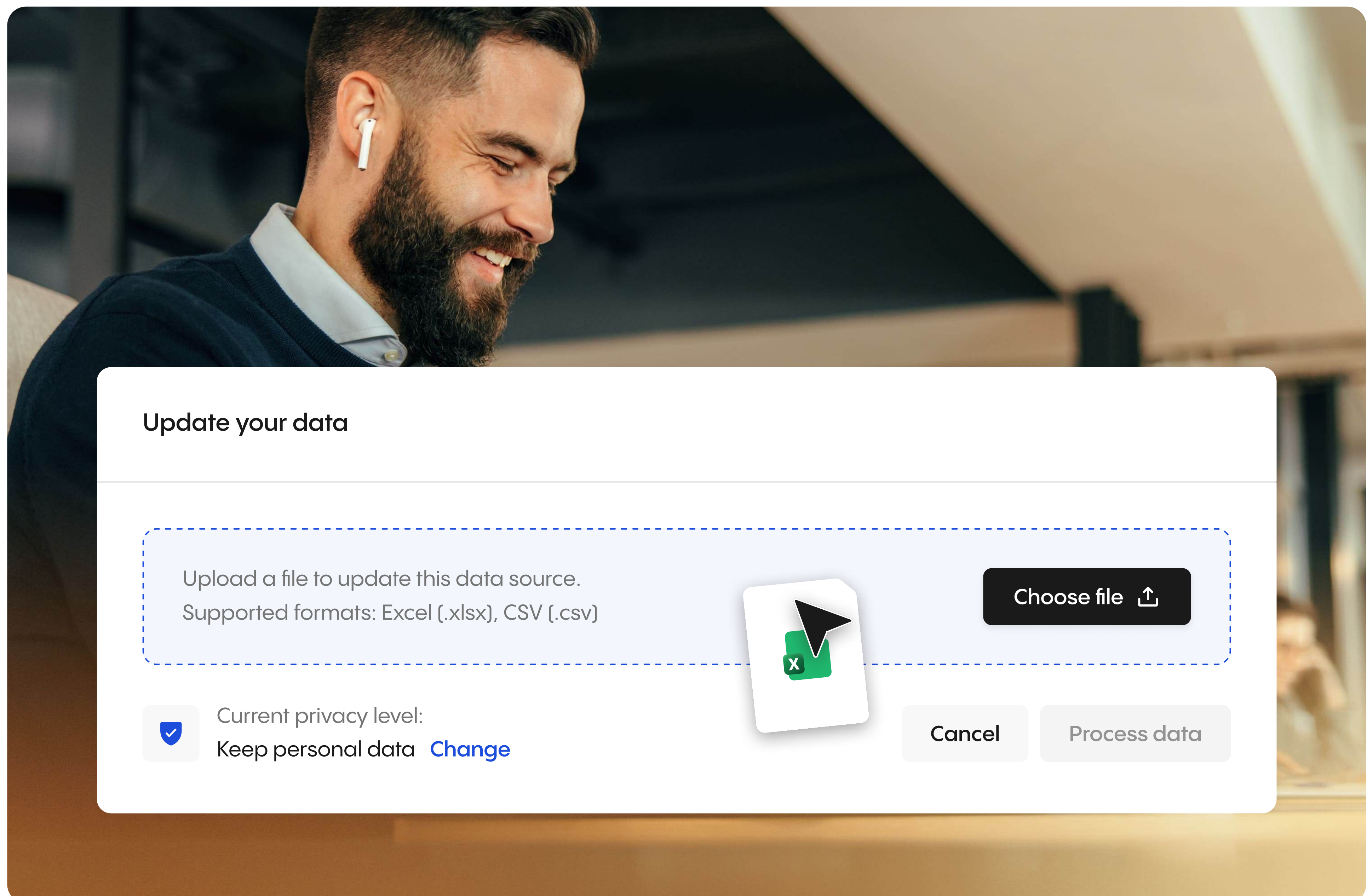
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1. Making big space decisions without usage data

The challenge. When you size a new location, you don't have usage history to draw on. Most teams default to copying their current setup or using general benchmarks to design the new space. Without data, this often happens even when they suspect it's the wrong blueprint.

What to do

- ✓ Borrow attendance and space-use data from your existing offices, and use it as your baseline, not a guess.
- ✓ If you have no data yet, start measuring now. Even a few weeks of real numbers beats assumptions.
- ✓ Treat the opening as a proof of concept: pilot a layout or booking model, prove what works, then scale it.



2. Right-sizing: too much space is also a problem

The challenge. Over-leasing wastes money. But an office that is too big also hurts experience — it feels empty, the energy drops, and people stop bumping into each other.

What to do

- ✓ Size for real attendance, not headcount. If 100 people are assigned but around 55 come in on a peak day, you do not need 100 desks.
- ✓ Use a desk-sharing ratio based on your actual peak, with a small buffer.
- ✓ Aim for "right-sized," not "spacious."

“Even if you spend all that money, you have more space than you need. That also harms the employee experience ... not because the office is too crowded, but because it's too empty. The energy is too low. You cannot cross-pollinate ideas.”

Ricardo Chacon
Founder,
The Common Blue



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3. Planning for hybrid peaks and valleys

The challenge. Hybrid attendance is uneven: Tuesday to Thursday often peaks at 40–60% in, while Monday and Friday drop to 20–35%. Plan for the average and peak days feel overcrowded while quiet days feel dead.

What to do

- ✓ Design for the peak day, then use bookings and team neighbourhoods to spread demand.
- ✓ Watch the gap between your busiest and quietest day; a big gap is a signal to shift events or set anchor day
- ✓ Re-check the pattern after opening — it will change as the office settles in.

Meeting room forecast

BETA

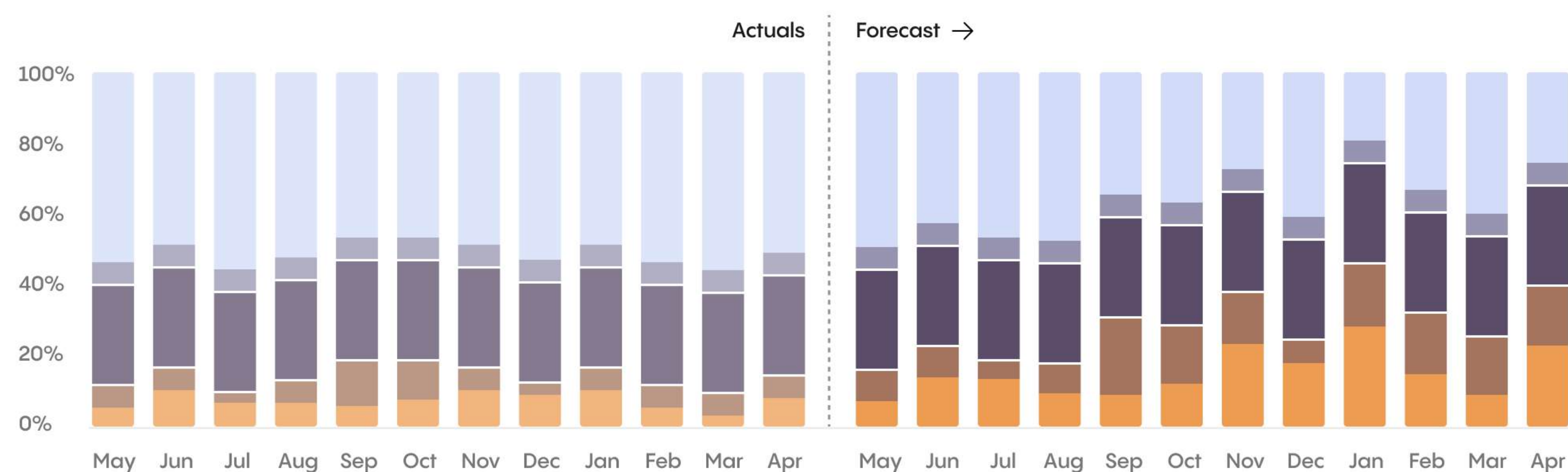
New York Headquarters

30 - 80%

Forecasted meeting room bookings

Percentage of time your meeting rooms will experience shortage or oversupply

Shortage On target Oversupply



Headcount

Mandate

Rooms

5 Days

4. Meeting rooms are almost always the bottleneck

The challenge. Meeting rooms are the number one capacity problem in most offices. New offices often get the mix wrong — too many large rooms, not enough small ones, and nowhere for a private call.

What to do

- ✓ Plan a mix weighted toward small rooms and 1–2 person call spaces, not just big boardrooms.
- ✓ Add proper enclosed phone booths — with a real desk, chair, and sound insulation — not pods dropped in as an afterthought.
- ✓ Base the mix on how rooms are really used: people per booking, no-shows, and how often large rooms hold only two people.

“We have around 55 desks in the office, and then we have 20% of that extra in proper phone booths with a desk and ergonomic chair that people can take their calls from ... because at the end of the day, the most important activity to people is focused work.”

Eve Wilkinson-Bell
Workplace Regional Manager,
HERE Technologies



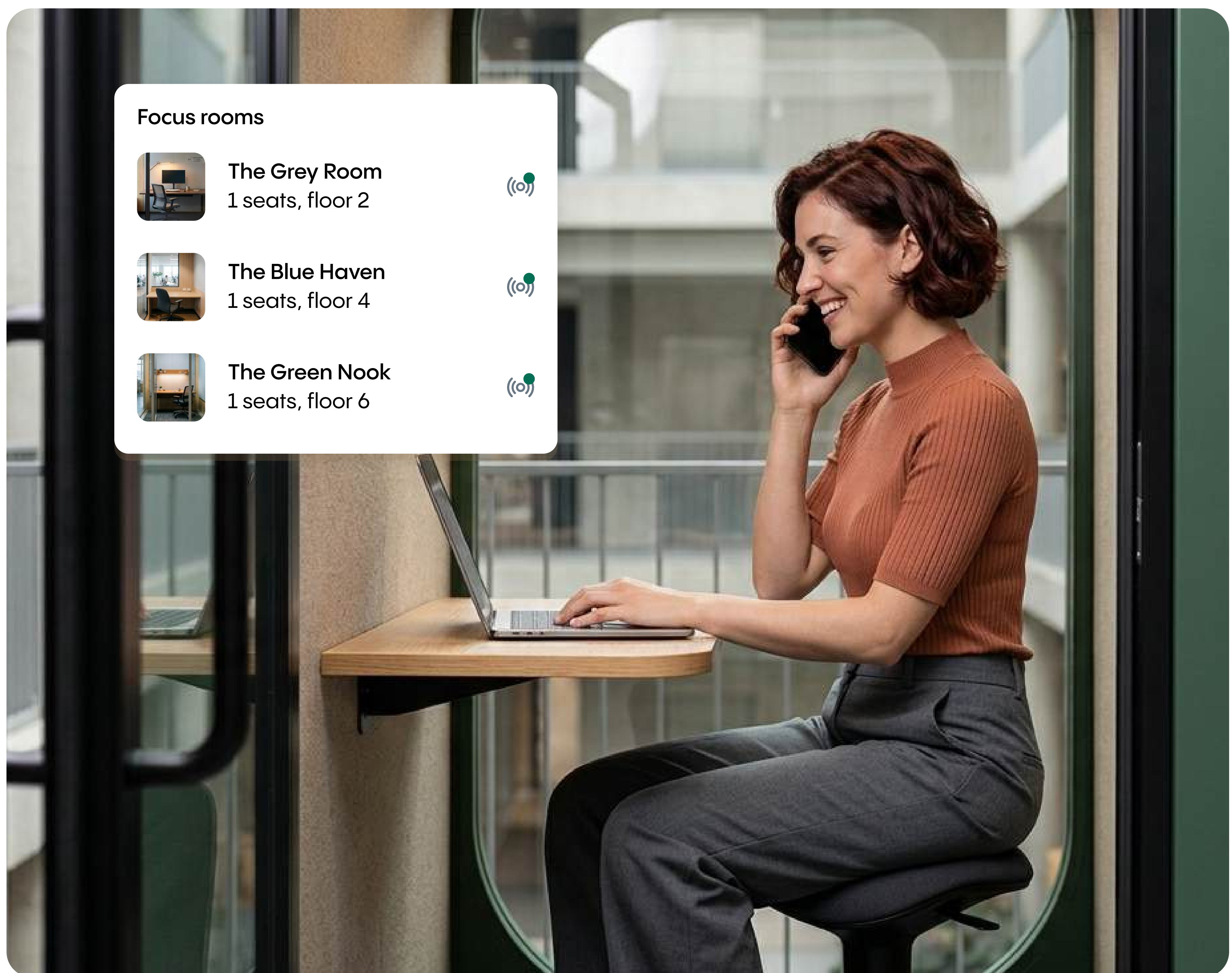
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5. Focus space is the most-needed — and the most forgotten

The challenge. For most employees, the single most important activity is still focused work, often with calls layered on. Offices that ignore this struggle no matter how good they look.

What to do

- ✓ Prioritise focus and call spaces first, then build collaboration zones around them.
- ✓ If people wander the floor with a laptop looking for somewhere to concentrate, that's a tell tale sign you do not have enough focus space.



6. Treating technology as an afterthought

The challenge. Wi-Fi, sensors, access control, booking, and AV often get bolted on at the last minute. Then they do not integrate, and the data is messy or missing.

What to do

- ✓ Put the network, sensors, and data infrastructure into the blueprint early.
- ✓ Map integrations up front: calendar (Outlook / Microsoft Teams), access control, Wi-Fi, and any booking system you keep.
- ✓ Decide what you keep versus replace before fit-out, and plan a flexible foundation that can evolve over years.

“You can't treat technology as an afterthought anymore. It has to be part of the design process.”

Jason Shearer
Workplace Field CTO



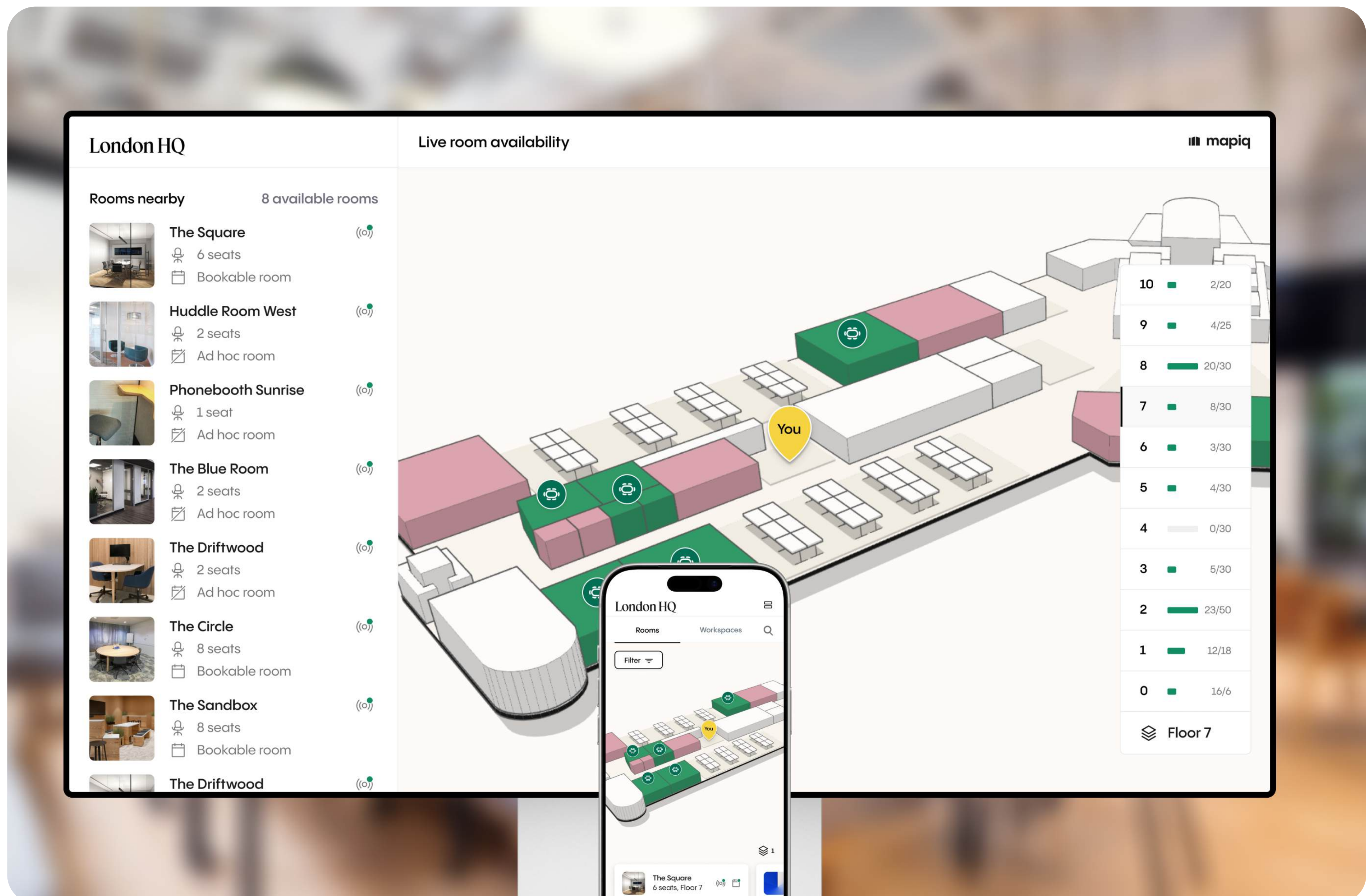
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7. Helping people navigate and use new spaces

The challenge. A new layout disorients everyone — new hires, visitors, and long-time staff. People waste minutes hunting for desks, rooms, and colleagues, which sets the tone for whether office days feel worth the commute.

What to do

- ✓ Make wayfinding live before opening: provide clear maps on a mix of mobile, web, displays, and kiosks to provide proper guidance and reduce frustration.
- ✓ Show real-time desk and room availability, and opt for technology that helps people to locate colleagues' working locations based on their bookings.
- ✓ Opt for technology with intuitive, self-serve map editing capabilities so you can avoid vendor dependency and delays when you need to update your office design.



8. New mandates and new ways of working

The challenge. A new office often times arrives with a new attendance policy. One-size-fits-all rules rarely fit, and vague messaging creates confusion and inconsistent enforcement. Sensors and analytics can also make people nervous about being tracked.

What to do

- ✓ Move from "employee and desk" to "employee and team": let teams agree how they work, within a clear framework, with anchor days.
- ✓ Base the policy on data and feedback, not assumptions, and revisit it once you see real patterns.
- ✓ Be clear and honest about data: measure spaces, not individuals, and explain your employees the benefits and ways this will reduce friction during office ays.

“If people are engaged, they will do better work. And that starts with trust.”

Henrik Jarleskog
Head of Future of Work



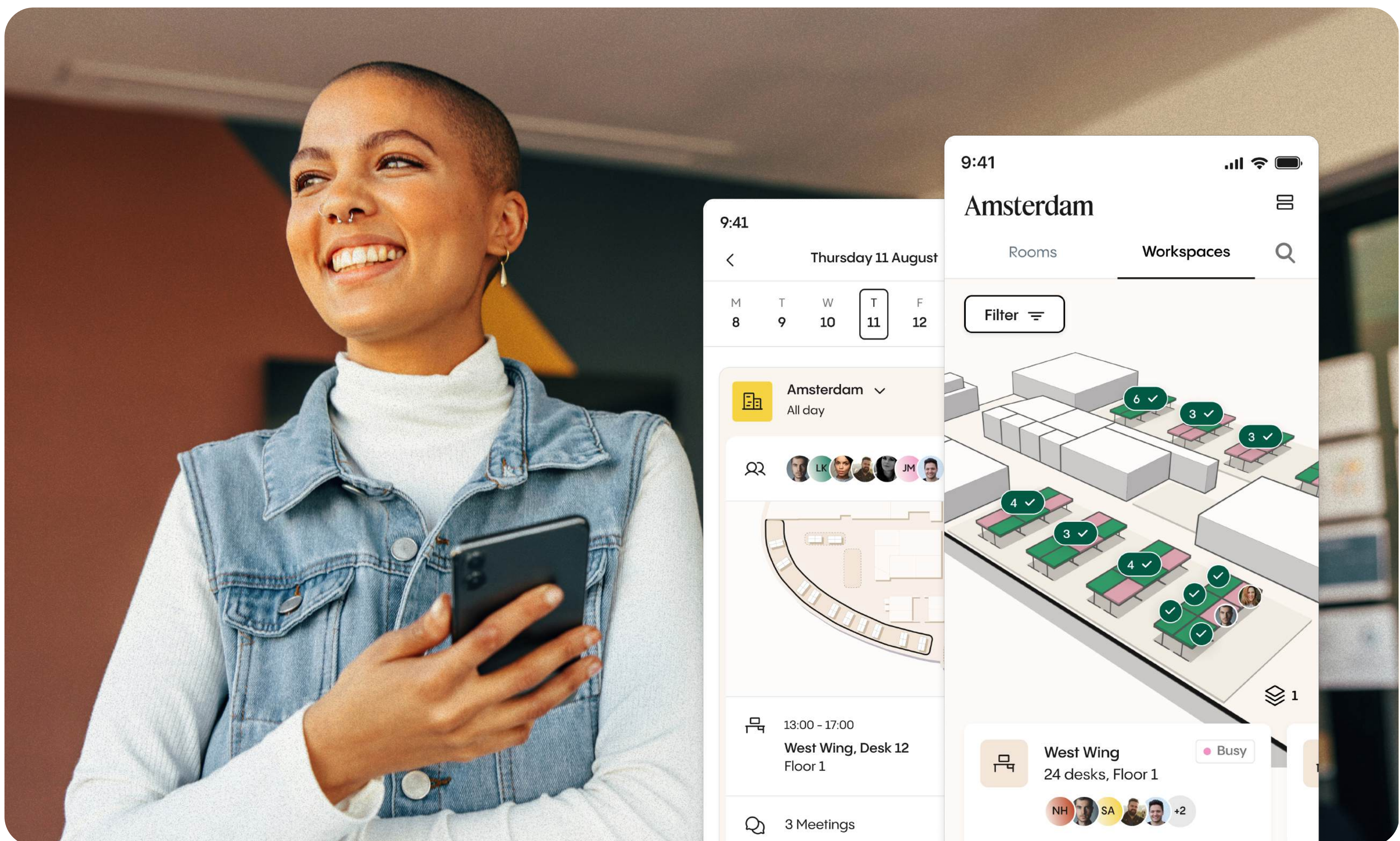
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9. Getting people to adhere to your booking policy

The challenge. Booking only works if people use it, and adoption fades fast if you set it up and walk away. Some will use it, some won't – and when there are too many desks, the incentive to book disappears, which leaves you with no usable data.

What to do

- ✓ Assign someone to champion your booking after launch, following up with users and their bookings, and staying genuinely customer-service oriented. Set it and forget it, and it regresses fast.
- ✓ Keep booking simple and low-friction: great UX (not just technically capable), works on any screen, SSO-backed, and integrated with calendars where needed.
- ✓ Make the value visible to employees: hybrid work gives them a level of freedom to enjoy. In return, simple booking guarantees a place to work on busy days and helps with better planning and office experience.



10. Proving the investment to leadership

The challenge. Workplace leaders own the result and have to defend space decisions to finance. Without data, "we need fewer desks" is just an opinion — and leadership now questions value, not only cost.

What to do

- ✓ Decide your success metrics before you open (occupancy, peak-day balance, room use, experience score).
- ✓ Set a baseline, then re-measure after opening to show the change.
- ✓ Frame the story around value: better experience, talent attraction and retention, and space that earns its keep.

“People are no longer questioning investments on the real estate side, but they're questioning value.”

Ashwini K.T
General Manager
R&D Services
@ Vestian



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Mapiq's new office solution

Mapiq's workplace experience platform helps you open well: plan the space with real data, help people find and use it from day one, and keep improving it so the move proves its worth.

Mapiq supports

- ✓ Desk and room booking — simple booking for desks, meeting rooms, and call spaces, on any screen and integrated with calendars.
- ✓ Data-driven space planning — use occupancy and attendance data from your existing sites to right-size the new office before you commit.
- ✓ Wayfinding — interactive floor maps and real-time desk and room availability, so people find spaces, rooms, and colleagues from the first day.
- ✓ Attendance and occupancy insights — see who's coming in, your peak and quiet days, and how attendance compares to bookings.
- ✓ Integrations — fits your stack: calendar (Outlook / Microsoft Teams), SSO, Occupancy Sensors, Access Management Systems, Open API and MCP.

Get in touch to see how Mapiq can help you open your new office well

[Get in touch here](#)