

Guidebook

THE SOCIAL INNOVATORS MODEL

From workspace
to collaborative ecosystem

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“I found a coworking space to work in where I have had the chance to find like-minded people and grow the human connections, I was missing from working at home.”

Maria Trujillo, Aqui Designs

Maria’s quote summarizes the modern phenomenon of co-working in a mere sentence. Coworking is not solely about flexibilization of the workspace that one would find himself or herself in, but it is about the people who are using it. It is about the connections that individuals from various backgrounds establish between themselves, and it is about the supportiveness of established ties. Setting up an open workspace will not create a community that would generate business opportunities or enhance the lives of individuals who were previously unemployed, freelancing from home or pursuing one of the variations of dislocated work. It will also not merely bring on the office environment where these people would start to share their knowledge, become more productive or have an innovative agenda on tackling the work or life processes.

Achieving all these aspects requires careful planning and a mere of adaptability to the needs and aspirations of local creative communities. Operators and managerial staff will be able to set the base that will establish a fertile ground for community-based office ecosystem, but it will be the users who will co-create the content and the processes within. Balancing the bottom-up and top-down approaches might seem like a complicated pathway to undertake, but it may soon show some promising results. The following document will, therefore, offer an in-depth understanding of relevant processes that will result in a sustainable and effective collaborative office model.

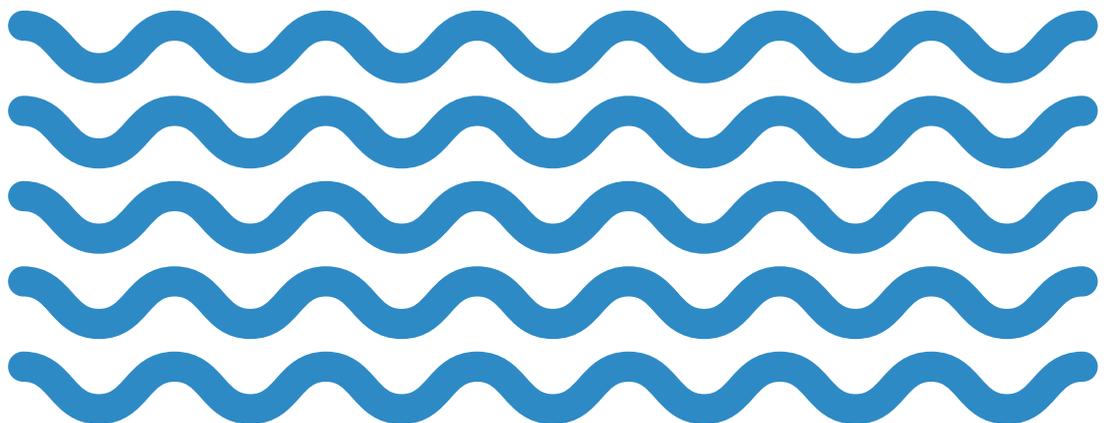
01 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INITIAL THOUGHTS

There have been momentous changes in how knowledge workers collaborate and work. These changes have been facilitated by the swift growth of creative hubs, collaborative workspaces, shared offices and coworking environments: shared, collaborative, open workspaces, with tools and technology facilitating shared work processes. Listed spaces essentially tear institutional barriers because they are shared by people who do not work for the same organisation. They break down geographic barriers because they are reachable in urban areas throughout the developed and developing world (Orel & Bennis, 2019). With the growth of distance cooperative work and technological tools and infrastructure that reduce geographic barriers and promote cooperation, socially oriented coworking spaces might seem an obvious extension of the coworking model.

The influence of physical proximity on collaboration suggests a further argument in favour of coworking spaces (Katz, 1994; Kraut, et al., 2002; Spinuzzi, 2012; Rus & Orel, 2015). They could serve to reduce the impact of physical proximity in collaboration by making remote collaboration easier. To the extent physical proximity remains essential, they could provide a space where the target groups can come together, generate concrete ideas for project initiatives with social impact and for generating new employment (Orel & Bennis, 2019).

While recent years have seen the rise of coworking and other collaborative workspaces, the gap for a specialized flexible ecosystem, resembling a heterogenic coworking space remains. The Social Innovators project thus aims to establish a new model that would generally benefit young individuals that tend to explore concrete possibilities for turning their ideas into reality and grow the network of collaborators and partners to mobilise support for their projects. Adoption of the Social Innovators environment to coworking space model would enhance lifelong learning due to increased interaction among involved peers, and would positively affect transdisciplinary collaborative knowledge sharing.



1.2 SUMMARIZING THE GOALS AND WAYPOINTS

The appeal of this approach is that the adapted coworking space model allows collaborators to overcome demonstrated barriers associated with geographic, disciplinary, institutional, and social-cultural-political borders that often limit and bias learning, teaching, science, innovation, and collaboration more generally.

Research and developmental work behind the Social Innovators model will, therefore:

1. Improve understanding of the benefits of collaborative workspace frame behind the model.

The following chapter will observe common errors and negative trends that are evolving within the coworking and shared office industry.

2. Theoretically test the best suitable and optimal implementation framework for the model

The following section of the subsequent chapter will go through recent theoretical advancement and frame the latest empiric research in order to offer an understanding of relevant variables that affect the developmental perspective of a collaborative workspace.

3. Investigate mechanisms of workspace design that promote collaboration between target groups across disciplines, institutions, and physical space.

Within the section, mediation mechanisms that support interactivity amongst collaborative office space users will be segmented and summarized in order to build up the understanding of how individuals engage in collaborative activity.

4. Create guidelines and waypoints on how to effectively implement the Social Innovators model in Sofia, Zagreb and Koper.

Understanding the selection procedures behind the optimal workspace

and its layout. Designing the workspace by introducing office elements that foster collaborative action, creativity and productivity. Investigating the best way on how to implement the mediation mechanisms that will support engagement between individual users and teams within the office space. Evaluating the impacts and taking the suitable action to support the further development of selected workspace.

5. List reading resources and related materials.

Providing the list of existing and additional resources for further understanding of the subject.

The following document aims to enable operators of the Social Innovators project to establish modular and flexible workspaces that will have high adaptability and flexibility for the involved youth. Therefore, the coming pages should be viewed as suggested guidelines but understood and taken with a significant level of possible manoeuvrability. Flexible workspaces are flexible because of the individuals who use them and therefore should not be fixed in a systematic position that does not allow change. Community builders and workspaces operators should be keen on exploring the needs and preferential spectrums of users and decide on how to develop the model accordingly.

Finally, a little suggestion on how to use this work guide. It would be wise to read it from the start to the end at first and afterwards to re-read the particular parts that contain the essential information about your future work obligations as a workspace operator.

“Coworking offers more freedom, independence, possibilities for self-realization and overall more freedom of choice than other forms of work.”

Carsten Foertsch, Deskmag

Modern coworking spaces have been around for about a decade and a half. Since the early days when the coworking model has emerged as a response to increasing individualisation of work towards today's large and corporate-owned corpoworkings, the model has been intensively evolving and hybridising. Recent Global Coworking Growth Study 2019 projects that the number of coworking spaces worldwide will increase by 42% in the next three years and reach about 26,000 spaces by 2022 worldwide (Hobson, 2019).

The almost exponential growth of flexible workspace industry has taken its toll. Nowadays, the prevailing coworking space model is slowly striving away from its origins, where comradeship was more critical than corporate relations, enhanced quality of informal lives had the spot before the increased productivity and knowledge-sharing was the norm.

When developing a collaborative workspace model from scratch, one needs to take all the developmental aspects and changes into account. The purpose of the following chapter is, therefore, to outline the common pitfalls of modern collaborative workspaces and to plan your planning – by understanding the backend of a functional coworking space model and the coworking scape framework. The chapter will mainly focus on smaller, independently founded workspaces.

02 UNDERSTANDING THE BACKGROUND

2.1 PITFALLS OF COLLABORATIVE WORKSPACES

Due to increased demand, opening a collaborative-oriented workspace may seem an appealing and viable business opportunity – when, in fact, it is not. Coworking and other types of collaborative workspaces (e.g. hackerspaces, maker labs, collaborative workshops, etc.) have sprung based on the existing or newly formed communities that had their values and norms. These communities were commonly consisting of freelancing individuals and other mobile workers who needed supportive environments in order to operationalize their daily work processes. With the popularization of these new

types of office environments, the demand grew as companies and organizations saw the possibility to gain access to talent pools and involve their employees in knowledge transfers, raise their productivity and tendency towards innovating. While newly founded workspaces have not had the time nor resources to establish an organizational culture within their walls, plan and articulate the mediation mechanisms and co-create the communities of work, they have been often left as generic office environments that bear little to none resemblance to the coworking model.

In other instances, newly created spaces have remained empty. Because of the raising demand, many founders and managers expect that their spaces will fill up instantly – but as Nimmo (2015) would say when summarizing his fail when opening up an independently run coworking space: *“Build it, and they will come – bullshit”*. Not carefully planning how to co-create the coworking community and other factors will lead to the downfall of the workspace, not necessarily financially, but in terms of its impact, prosperity and contribution to (local) society.

TABLE 1
Common pitfalls of newly established collaborative workspaces

<p>LIMITED UNDERSTANDING OF THE COWORKING MODEL</p>	<p>The recurring pitfall of managers and founders is that they have not spent a single day in another coworking space and have minimal knowledge of the processes related to managing a shared workspace. Because of associated limitations and lack of experiences, a newly opened workspace might have a wrongly planned layout that is nor customisable nor adaptable. Moreover, managers may not prepare a functional community co-creation plan and transfer their managerial knowledge to workspace staff that has limited comprehension and grasp on how to handle the daily challenges.</p>
<p>WRONGLY PLANNED WORKSPACE LAYOUT</p>	<p>Coworking space communities commonly undergo organic evolution and growth. Even if the number of individual users remains the same over the time, workspace members will change and have different preferences over time. The latter essentially means that the workspace layout and design need to be highly adaptable and customizable.</p>
<p>REAL-ESTATE MARKET CHANGE</p>	<p>The real-estate market tends to change and tends to change fast. It is vital to secure a long-term lease in order to have a stable condition for the healthy growth of selected workspace.</p>
<p>NON-EXISTENT COMMUNITY CO-CREATION PLAN</p>	<p>On numerous occasions, the newly established coworking spaces neglect the planning of mediation mechanisms that foster connectivity and interactivity between workspace users. If productivity is the sole focus of a workspace, the lack of social connections and possible opportunities for new collaborations may be the factor for individuals changing the workspace.</p>
<p>WORKSPACE PERSONNEL WITH BOUNDED SKILLS</p>	<p>Workspace personnel needs to have several virtues of handling the coworking space and its growing community. Ignoring user feedback, letting trends distract from expected productivity of users, obsessing over involving members in every community activity and general lack of empathy are just a few common drawbacks that can turn users away from the selected workspace.</p>

TECHNOLOGY CONSIDERATIONS

Fast and reliable internet connection with a secure line is critical to sustaining the uninterrupted workflow of individuals. When it comes to the planning of the workspace layout, projecting the stable Wi-Fi connectivity and sufficient data transfer speed is essential. Frequent interruptions may cause individuals to seek another workspace.

SECURITY CONCERNS

Mediation mechanisms tend to establish a supportive network amongst workspace users and foster both trust and honesty system that causes the establishment of non-formalized neighbour watch within the selected coworking environment. Users incline to watch over their equipment and possessions. On the other hand, if the selected workspace is seeing a higher frequency of incoming and outgoing workspace users, it is necessary to establish a sort of security mechanism (e.g. keyless door access, etc.) in order to control the influx of non-authorised individuals. The critical outcome is to avoid the possibility of theft that can shatter the trust factor within the coworking space and amongst the community members.

SOURCE

Saldibar (2014), Nimmo (2015), Kreuser (2016), Estrada (2017), Chatterton (2018a) & Davis (2019).

Understanding frequent mistakes that coworking space managers make when opening up a space is essential for planning. Having a developed model and implementation strategy may not be enough. The subsequent chapter thus advances into the understanding of preplanning and draws upon possible solutions.

2.2 BEFORE THE PLANNING – PLAN!

The following subchapter traverses into three parts. Firstly, it explores the so-called coworking scape framework (Balakrishnan et al., 2019) that analyses both physical and social elements that co-create and generate behavioural patterns of the user base. Secondly, it builds upon the framework for innovative disposition of the collaborative workspace model (Cheah & Ho, 2019) that will be an integral part of every Social Innovators workspace. And thirdly, the last part takes into account the common pitfalls of newly established collaborative workspaces and delivers waypoints on how to tackle them.

The process of preplanning can be seen as an essential and required part of every collaborative workspace. Not only is the understanding of both physical and social elements essential, but it is utterly crucial to know how to moderate the correlated variables. Workspace layout, for example, is directly correlated with the workspace ambience, while the frequency of interactivity amongst members is directly linked with cultural practices that shape the selected workspace.

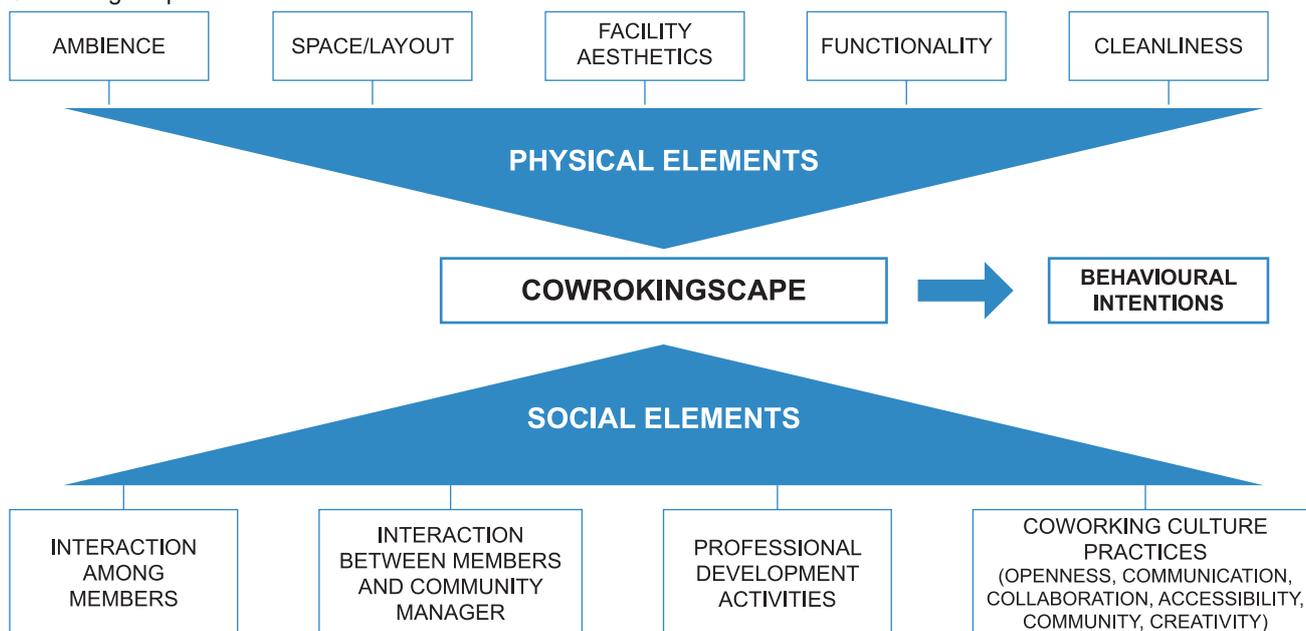
Figure 1 frames crucial elements that shape the environment and transform it into a coworking space. Physical elements are workspace ambience, workspace layout, facility aesthetics, functionality and cleanliness of the space. Social elements can be subcategorized onto four correlated elements starting with the interaction among members, the interaction between members and community managers, development activities that are offered within the space and coworking culture practice that is based on values and norms.

Starting with the **physical elements**, workspace ambience can be understood as office atmosphere that affects a) the level of productivity, b) workspace attachment, c) willingness towards interaction and potential and d) openness towards knowledge sharing and support. A recent study on coworking space ambience (Orel & Alonso-Almeida, 2019/forthcoming) shows the ambience that is tailored to particular coworking space enhances the possibility of collaboration between two or more users of a selected workspace. The factors of spatial comfortability are an essential predisposition for work-

space users to engage in cooperation with each other, and various mechanisms are needed to customise these engagements into cooperative action. The ambience, therefore, plays a crucial role and is a sum of the other four physical elements in the workspace.

Workspace can have a different layout arrangement with the most reoccurring form being a mixture between non-territorial and territorial arrangement. Work tables, supplied with power sockets and ergonomic chairs are standardised workstations that can be mainly found in every coworking space. However, their implementation in the space is necessary and should be preferably highly customizable. While some individuals prefer to have their desks positioned next to the wall or a window, others may prefer to have their place in the middle of the space. On the other hand, every collaboratively oriented workspace needs to have a various setting arrangement. Not solely because individuals tend to select their daily work ground on their momentary preference, but because furniture that is intended for shared use (e.g. larger sofas, beanbags, etc.) promotes group action (e.g.

FIGURE 1
Coworking scape framework



Source: Balakrishnan et al. (2016)

spontaneous conversations and informal chats, etc.). Therefore, the more diverse the workspace, the better. Two examples – a simplified and a more complex one – of workspace design that promotes interactivity amongst workspace users are shown below.

The first example shows a simplified conceptual study of a functional workspace. The open space is divided into four segments that can be used for either individual or team work. The largest area has three shared sitting areas that can accommodate up to eight individuals. The proximity of individuals enables a) group interactivity in the case of teamwork and b) spontaneous interactions in the case of individual work. Part of the space is closed off with glass panels that create the sensation of openness while offering privacy for an individualised meeting or video conference. The other part of the workspace is designated for leisure over a beverage (e.g. coffee, etc.) in order to enable individuals to have a) rest and b) informal gatherings. The last part of the space is purposely designed for group work of smaller teams that are working on mutual work processes and need a higher level of privacy.

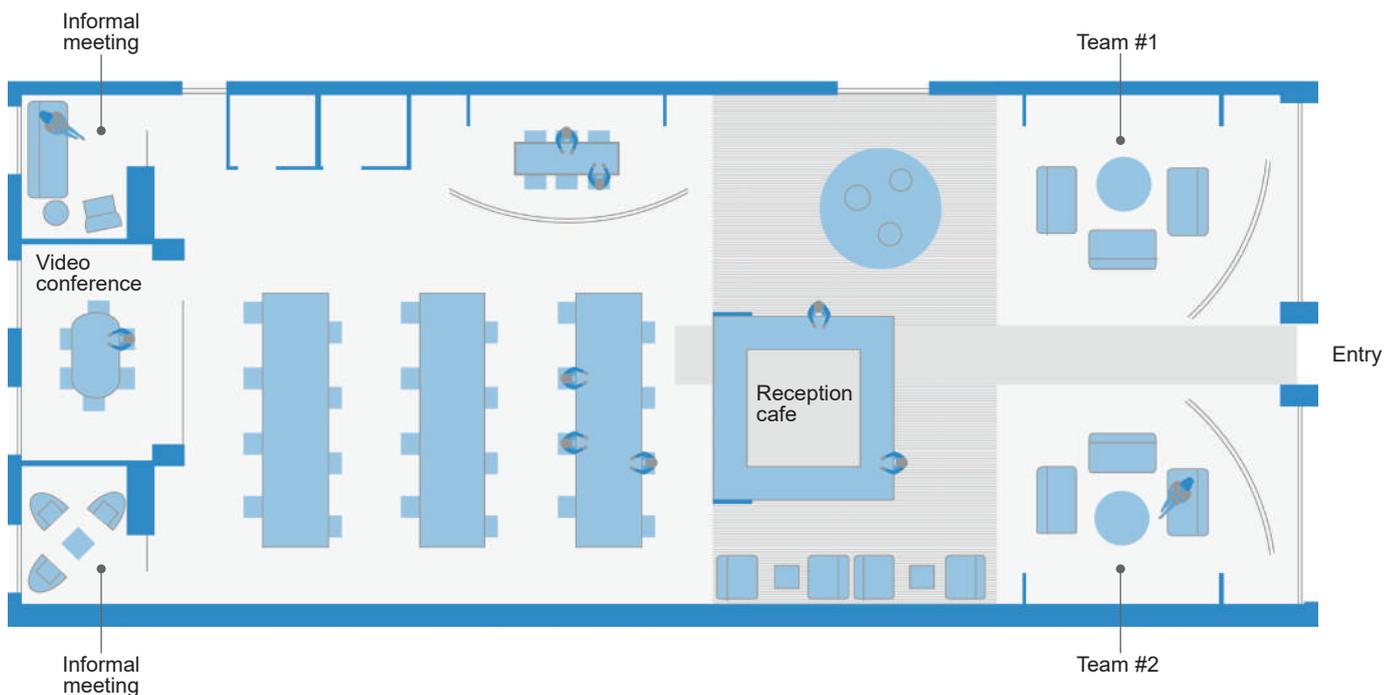
The second example shows a more complex and diverse coworking space design. While the workplace design is still based on an open-layout, the workspace is modularly divided in order to support various forms of work and interaction. Ample, multipurpose space on the far left provides an area for a range of business and community activities. The central part of the space contains several highly adaptable modular soft-seating areas. In between, individuals and teams who are using the space can find closed-off meeting rooms, where they can conduct individualised meetings and work sessions.

Coming from this, the next element that is important for the workspace design is workspace aesthetic. Some workspaces tend to be colourful and appear playful, while others tend to have a more simple, minimalistic design to it. Research, however, shows that different colour schemes in workspaces enhance productivity and create the sensation of comfortability (Pitt & Bennett, 2018; Tucker & Smith 2008; Kamaruzzaman & Zawawi, 2010). Furniture elements are commonly very varied and mixed within the space. In smaller, bottom-up created coworking spaces

PICTURE 1

Example of a coworking concept for a floor plan.

Adapted from: Miciunas (2012).



there is a recurrent trend of enabling workspace users to bring their furniture. The later does not solely enhance so-called space attachment but diversifies the workspace with the use of various items that generally would not be a subject of a planned design (Rus & Orel, 2015). However, industry practices suggest that the work area should be somewhat conservative when it comes to using a vast array of colours. While red and blue colours are associated with well-being, social cohesion and productivity (Bakker et al., 2013), pink and purple are sometimes considered as distractive colours (Kamaruzzaman & Zawawi, 2010). However, Woolner et al. (2007) have shown that pink coloured room affects the positive mood of individuals with yellow colour having a balancing effect when used in an office set-up (Kamarulzaman et al., 2011).

Furniture elements that are used within the shared workspace need to be highly flexible and functional. Workstations should be movable, because of a) adaptability of the workspace and possibility to convert it into an event space and b) customizability that enables users to reposition their daily work area.

Leisure-oriented parts of the space should have modular furniture that allows workspace operators to adapt the space for various purposes (e.g. community events, conferences, sports activities such as community yoga etc.).

Lastly, the workspace needs to be clean and well-maintained. Larger co-working spaces (e.g. WeWork, Hub-Hub, etc.) have their cleaners that maintain the workspace area around the clock. Smaller workspaces need to establish a system that enables them to save on the costs, but still tackle the cleanliness. The latter can be achieved with designated norms and values and with the implementation of a reward system (e.g. members who clean cups and dishes get a discount on coffee, etc.). However, the most effective way to keep a high level of cleanliness is to enable the development of space attachment. By allowing workspace users to customize the workspaces and (re) arrange it according to their preferences and needs, they will start to perceive the workspace as 'theirs' and possibly do their best to keep it relatively clean. Daily cleaning service is still a must.

PICTURE 2

Design to promote serendipitous opportunities for connection and collaboration. The example of Civic Hall.

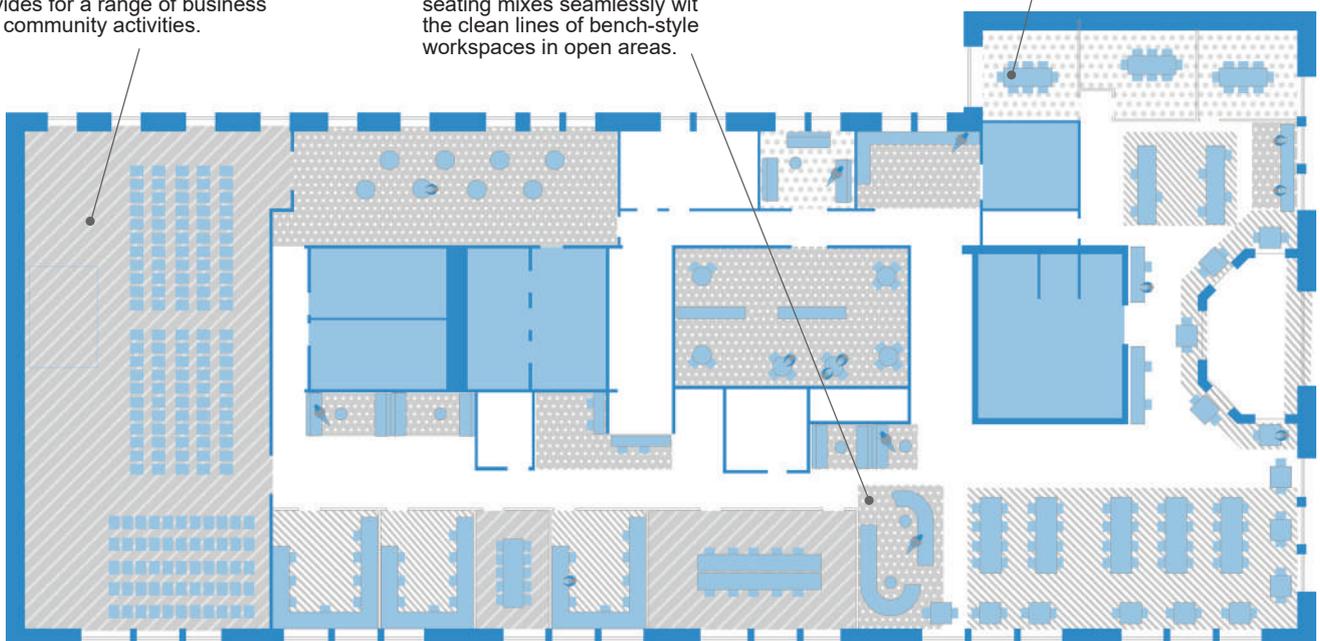
Adapted from: Roth, K. & Mirchandani (2016).

-  Community
-  Team meeting
-  Assembly
-  Primary
-  Stairwell / toilet / ...

A large, multipurpose space provides for a range of business and community activities.

Highly adapted modular soft/seating mixes seamlessly with the clean lines of bench-style workspaces in open areas.

Well-equipped group spaces offer quiet meeting rooms.



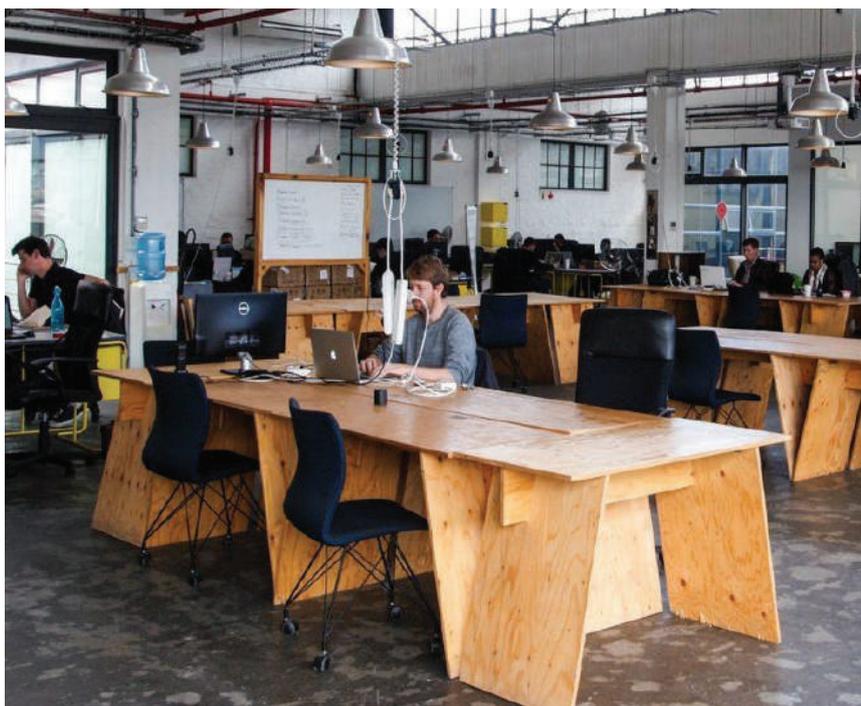
Suggestions for synergetic levels between physical elements in order to maximize the outputs are:

- Incorporate biophilic design and focus on bringing the outdoors inside. Sensation towards having a connection with nature while having access to fresh air, direct sunlight and greenery enable individuals to cope both mentally and physically with their daily work tasks.
- Essential furniture within the space should be functional with the possibility of diverse use. Tables should be movable in order to convert the functionality of the space (e.g. for a community event, etc.) with leisure related elements (e.g. sofas, etc.) being modular in order to convert them into a group sitting area.
- Use a diverse but compatible colour scheme within the workspace. While the work area should be somewhat conservative, the event and/or leisure area can be very diverse in colours.
- Allow workspace adaptability and flexibility. Members commonly express a tendency to have a specific piece of furniture within the workspace. Allowing them to either communicate their preferences or think about permitting them to bring their functional furniture.
- Make sure that the space is clean. While having a professional cleaning service that cleans and maintains the workspace on a weekly or bi-weekly basis is a must, be sure to build awareness towards cleanliness amongst the workspace users.

PICTURE 3

Proximity-based workspace design. Example of a shared workstation.

Source: Taylor (2017).

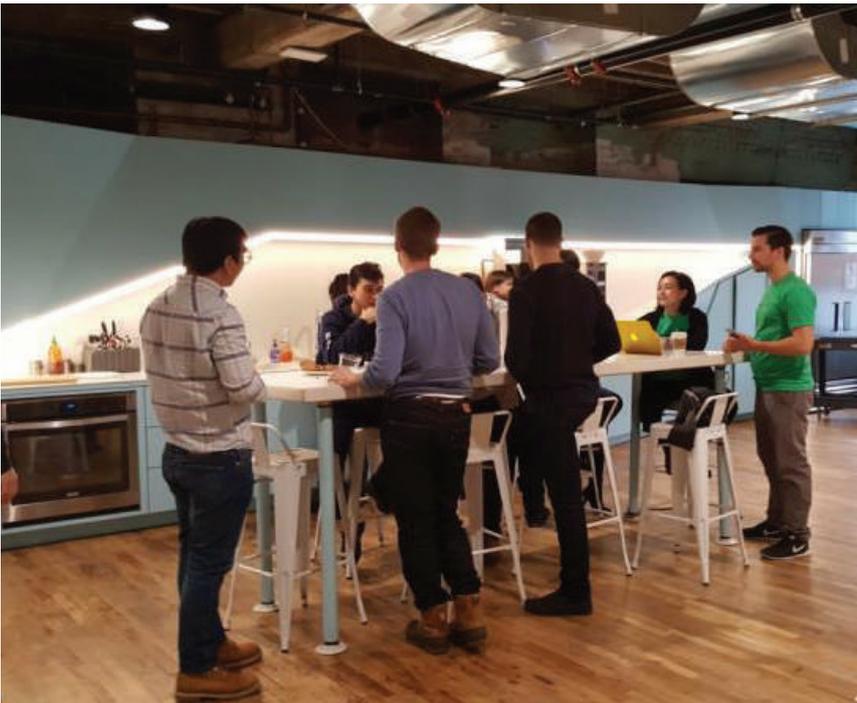


Moving towards **social elements** within the workspace, interactivity between workspace users is the core of every coworking environment. Interaction can roughly be divided into spontaneous and moderated interactivity. Spontaneous interactivity takes place due to workspace design that is based on proximity and unplanned interaction that commences between one or more individuals due to their closeness within a specified period (Rus & Orel, 2015).

Spontaneous mechanisms that can be applied within the workspace include:

1. Shared, non-territorial based tables
2. Designated areas with commodities for a group use such as a coffee corner or dining area
3. Leisure-based areas such as a game room or relaxation corner.

The first example shows a shared, non-territorial based workstation. Due to proximity, users tend to engage in



PICTURE 4
Proximity-based workspace design.
Example of a dining corner.
Source: Cirillo (2017).

PICTURE 5
Proximity-based workspace design.
Example of a game room.
Source: Acosta (2019)

serendipitous and unplanned encounters with each other. While specific positions within the workspace can be fixed, it is advisable to have the personal equipment (e.g. monitors, wireless keyboards, etc.) accessible for other users. The latter promoted the sensation of sharing that is one of the core values of the coworking model.

The second example shows the dining table, where individuals tend to engage in an informal conversation. Due to the relatively small size factor of the dining table, individuals have the higher chance to interact and potentially share their provisions (e.g. food, etc.) and therefore take part in the equal exchange.

The last example shows a game room with office hoops, ping pong table and a table football. Devices enable individuals to participate in group leisure activities that commonly sprung informal conversations. All three cases manifest the spontaneous mediation mechanisms that sprung interaction between individual users of the selected workspace.

While the latter frequently results in casual and non-formal interactions, the mediated activities may resolve in planned interexchange. Mediated activities are commonly community-oriented and have a specified output. Casual community lunch can, for example, promote the supportiveness of community network through informal relations and social support (Gerdenitsch et al., 2016), while specialized events can encourage knowledge-sharing activities.

Examples of mediated community activities are:

1. Community gatherings over leisure activities
2. Know-how sharing events
3. Group discussions
4. Support orientated events, such as product/service launch get-to-gather.

Spontaneous mechanisms are drafted in a way that they do not include the human factor when it comes to the mediation of relationships. On the other hand, mediated activities need workspace personnel. Commonly known as community managers (Green, 2014; Cabral & Van Winden, 2016; Spinuzzi et al., 2019), these workspace staff members are essential to foster planned interaction amongst coworking space users. Spontaneous mechanisms ha-

bitually establish non-formal ties, while mediated activities create meaningful connections that may resolve in collaboration on a work process between two or more individuals. Highly specialized and well-trained workspace staff is therefore essential for a coworking space that tends to build a supportive network within its community.

Community managers can plan professional development activities, such as workshops and classes for workspace members, to offer personal development and learning. Depending on the potential specialization of a selected workspace, these professional development activities can be homogeneous (e.g. tech events with the focus on programming, engineering and hacking) or heterogeneous (e.g. wide array of topics with no particular focus or narrowed specialization). Not only that these events offer an opportunity in recognition and exploration of the human talent within the workspace, but can generate different specializations and expertise that can be used to benefit the community or the workspace (or both).

Last but not least, the organizational agenda and value system within the coworking space are necessary to establish an organizational culture that

VALUES

Collaboration over competition

Community over agendas

Participation over observation

Doing over saying

Friendship over formality

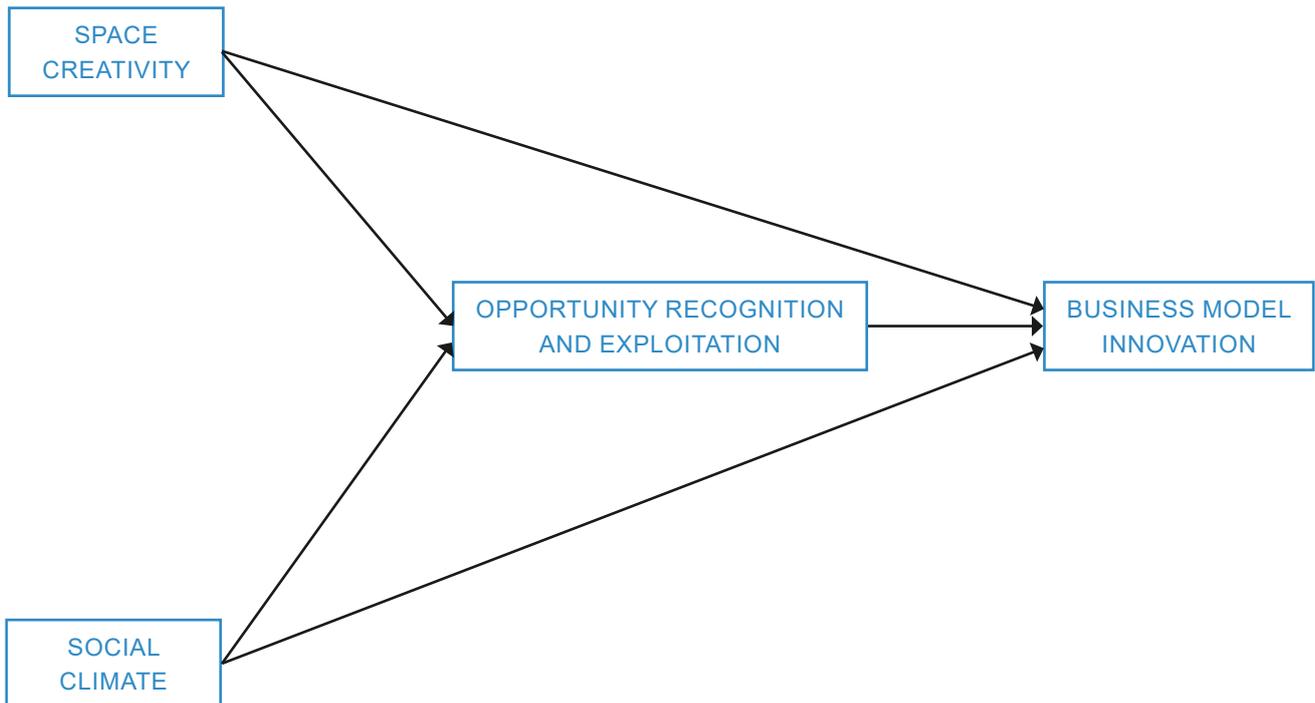
Boldness over assurance

Learning over expertise

People over personalities

Value ecosystem over the value chain

TABLE 2
Coworking manifesto
Source: Seet (2019).



frames behavioural patterns of individual workspace users. Early coworking models have established their value systems based on so-called Coworking Manifesto, a written, public and universal statement declaring intentions, motives and views of coworking spaces with the purpose of promoting the base benefits of a coworking model.

Collaboration over competition promotes the interexchange of information and mutual help. Community over personal agendas puts communitarian goals before individualized tendencies. Participation over observations assures proactive involvement in the community, while doing over saying affirms towards actual collaboration between workspace users. Friendship over formality promotes non-formal social ties, with boldness over assurance promoting innovative and breakthrough thinking. Learning over expertise promotes knowledge sharing, with the value of people over personalities encouraging workspace individuals to focus on the personal virtues of other users. And lastly, value ecosystem over value chain nurtures the sustainable development of selected coworking space community.

As we have seen, the coworking scape links numerous elements into correlations that foster specific behavioural patterns within the community of a selected coworking space. Not only that these expected behavioural patterns are utterly crucial for the growth of a coworking space, but are necessary for generating meaningful outputs that can benefit society. Therefore, the following elements need to be narrowed and personalized for the Social Innovators workspace model in order to make the spaces created under the model sustainable, long-lasting and impactful within their localities.

The following figure links the variables for innovative disposition of the coworking model that will be adapted accordingly to open three Social Innovators workspaces. The purpose of successful adaptation is to get Social Innovators workspaces to build traction within local societies and attract other homogeneous and heterogeneous communities.

Firstly, selected workspaces that will host Social Innovators work grounds need to be perceived as highly creative.

Following the coworking space framework, workspaces will be highly flexible and adaptable with functional work and leisure areas, and well-planned activities. Secondly, social elements will be adapted in a way that will foster innovative and collaborative-oriented social climate within the workspace. Both sets of factors will be adapted in a way that will support the opportunities for recognition and positive exploitation of their communities. Following the selected pathway, Social Innovators model has high prosperity to evolve into an innovative model that could be replicated in other cities and countries globally.

FIGURE 2
Linking variables for innovative disposition of the coworking model
Source: Cheah & Ho (2019)

Moving towards the last part of this chapter and progressing from theoretical perspectives towards practical implications, we will oversee the concrete actions that need to be taken into account within the pre-planning phase. In the previous chapter, Table 1 has summarized the most common pitfalls

and challenges that are associated with the newly opened coworking spaces. It is vital to tackle the addressed issues before opening the workspace comprehensively. Table 2, therefore, offers an overview of possible solutions and waypoints on how to minimise the risk of the failure.

The following chapter will progress onwards and establish waypoint for the Social Innovators workspace model.

TABLE 3

Tackling the common pitfalls of newly established workspaces

Source: own.

<p>LIMITED UNDERSTANDING OF THE COWORKING MODEL</p>	<p>1. Coworking manager and community operator need to be educated in the field of human resource management. Not only following the latest resources (see the reading suggestions at the end of the guidebook), but these newly appointed individuals who will narrate the community mediation need to visit other collaborative workspaces in the region to understand not necessarily future, but parallel trends, challenges and user's expectations.</p>
<p>REAL-ESTATE MARKET CHANGE</p>	<p>1. Study real-estate market developments and future projects. 2. Secure a long-term lease. 3. Carefully select the suitable workspace that offers high growth potential and adaptability for future needs.</p>
<p>WRONGLY PLANNED WORKSPACE LAYOUT</p>	<p>1. Plan the initial layout with a) shared work desks, chairs and enough power sockets, b) essential utilities such as printing corner and kitchen facilities and c) additional basic furniture like sofas and armchairs to offer sufficient sitting diversity. 2. Over-planning may bring more negative perceptions than positive results – it is difficult to project what will be the preferential scheme of workspace community and how their preferences may change over time. It is thus essential to leave enough space for adaptability of the workspace and its design.</p>
<p>NON-EXISTENT COMMUNITY CO-CREATION PLAN</p>	<p>1. Prepare a community building plan before opening up space with a) allocating potentially existing creative communities that would use the workspace, b) understanding preferential organisational norms and values that will underline the expected behavioural patterns in the workspace and c) projecting the growth rate of your userbase. 2. Carefully plan mediation mechanisms that will foster interactivity among workspace users. 3. While setting clear goals helps with the community building plan, the plan will still need much flexibility as communities commonly undergo the organic growth – perspectives, participation and personal agenda of a userbase might change over time.</p>

WORKSPACE PERSONNEL WITH BOUNDED SKILLS

1. Recruit individuals that are a) high on empathy, b) are non-conflict-oriented and c) are highly sociable.
2. Train your team before opening the workspace. An adequate understanding of the coworking model is essential for optimal development of your workspace.
3. Do not over-manage the workspace personnel. Leave them to show their real virtues and social skills and allow them to make suggestions on how to a) improve the workspace layout, b) better manage the workspace, c) improve the use of mediation mechanisms and c) share any other relevant feedback.

TECHNOLOGY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Stable and secure internet connection is an absolute must at all times. Connectivity needs to be carefully planned before opening the space – high download and upload speeds are not enough. Collaborative workspaces are commonly open-planed offices with a high volume of devices that are using the data. Remember – one person does not mean one device, and the network can easily be overwhelmed with substantial data usage.
2. Ensure that there are more power sockets and splitters in the workspaces than needed.
3. Regularly gather the feedback on technological preferences of your user-base.

SECURITY CONCERNS

1. Plan security concerns based on the a) layout of the workspace, b) position of the building and c) expected influx on members and non-members into the workspace.
2. Every security measure needs to remain minimal. Individual users may find specific measures restrictive (e.g. placement of the camera in the workspace, security personnel, etc.). Therefore, it is advisable that the measures are taken in consent with the workspaces users and kept on a minimal stage (e.g. locked front doors, but with enabled 24/7 access to workspace members).

***“The spirit of coworking
allows you to find co-workers
who are worth working with.”***

Cynthia Chiam in Entrepreneur

The chapter is divided into five parts, starting with the suggestions for the workspace design. The section on staff selection and training will narrow the actions on how to select and adequately train the workspace staff that will operate with the facilities and implement the proposed mediation mechanism. Member management will imply on how to effectively manage full-time or part-time workplace users with the last chapter proposing the process of evaluating operational aspects of selected *Social Innovators* workplace, the community development and effectiveness of mediation activities within.

03 ESTABLISHING THE SOCIAL INNOVATORS WORKSPACE

3.1 WORKSPACE DESIGN & STAFF SELECTION AND TRAINING

3.1.1 DESIGNING A FUNCTIONAL WORKSPACE

INITIAL PHASE / Before the opening

Divide the workspace into the three essential areas:

- **Whole space** / Establish a stable and secure internet connection, provide sufficient lightness to space.
- **Workspace area** / Larger movable tables with at least 2–4 sitting places, ergonomic office chairs, power sockets.
- **Leisure & event area** / Café-styled area with sofas, armchairs and cosy furniture, self-service coffee machine with locally roasted coffee, self-service fridge with locally produced beverages, self-service snacks, including projector & white screen & audio technology (PA system with two active speakers, multichannel mixer, wireless microphones).
- **Meeting room area** / Preferably two to three individual and partially closed off (glass-walled, if possible) and soundproofed spaces with a large table and 6-8 ergonomic office chairs, teleconference technology (camera, LCD screen, sound system).

SECOND PHASE / 6-12 month after the opening

Upon non-formalized feedback from users (to be collected by the community manager), take the following action:

- **Workspace area** / Add and re-arrange the existing workstations, potentially add more power sockets, gather feedback whether the brightness is sufficient.
- **Leisure & event area** / Adapt the space according to the feedback by adding more cosy furniture elements, potentially allow members to bring their furniture (e.g. smaller furniture that would be beneficial to space).
- **Meeting room area** / Depending on the usage frequency, think about changing the usability of the meeting rooms (e.g. focus rooms, game room, etc.).

3.1.2 ESTABLISHING A CAPABLE OPERATIONAL TEAM

Roles of the community manager will be the following:

1. Introducing the new members into the community
2. Taking care of the workspace
3. Building a healthy ecosystem
4. Fostering interactions through mediation activities
5. Offer support
6. Gather informal feedback from community members
7. Improve workspace services and design

3.2 MEMBER MANAGEMENT

There are three general steps when some of the member management:

1. Membership packages. Different packages with different values and streams of services (i.e. workspace usage and additional services).
2. Workspace sale funnel. Different steps and waypoint when a potential member signs-up as an SI workspace member.
3. Mechanisms for member retention. While mediation mechanisms build up a supportive community, there are several approaches that can assist with retaining the user.

MEMBERSHIP PACKAGES

Membership packages differ based on the type, workspace usage and possible additional services.

TABLE 4

Proposed membership packages
Source: own.

TYPE	Workspace usage	Additional services
FREE-DAY PASS	One free trial day	Workspace tour
30H/MONTH PASS	30h/month of workspace usage	Supporting services (e.g. consulting, assisting, etc.)
50H/ MONTH PASS	50h/month of workspace usage	Supporting services (e.g. consulting, assisting, etc.)
UNLIMITED PASS	Unlimited pass	Supporting services (e.g. consulting, assisting, etc.)
VIRTUAL MEMBERSHIP	No workspace usage, but access to member's events	None

WORKSPACE SALE FUNNEL

Member acquiring funnel undergoes the following steps:

1. A potential member comes into space based on SI promotional and human talent attraction activities.
2. The potential member is introduced to the workspace by the community manager by a) offering a tour around the SI space and b) personal approach with engaging into an informal conversation about the potential member's expectations..
3. Potential member signs-up for a free-day trial.
4. Potential member agrees on signing up for one of the packages.
5. The newly acquired member gets presented with all the necessary information about the SI workspace and includes in relevant communication channels.

MECHANISM FOR MEMBER RETENTION

Summarized in the following table.

TABLE 5

Member retention mechanisms

MEMBER WALL	Have a membership wall with a member's basic info and their expertise listed somewhere within the workspace. This action will allow to visually contribute towards building a space attachment of users.
ESTABLISH COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND MODERATE COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES	Establish digital channels where your members could communicate. Slack, a cloud-based communication software, is commonly a preferred option within the industry. Be sure that the community managers accelerate the flow of communication by actively participating in debates.

PERFORM REGULAR SURVEYS, ASSES THE FEEDBACK AND MAKE CHANGES	See the section about evaluation.
FOSTER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	See the following subchapter.
ESTABLISH A MEMBER LOYALTY SYSTEM	Give something back to loyal and long-term members. This can be either a discount, additional service or an item.

Source: own.

3.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND MEDIATION MECHANISMS

Take the following steps:

1. Implement and promote Social Innovators manifesto to establish expected behavioural patterns of within localized communities.
2. Plan and execute mediation activities.
3. Gather the feedback, evaluate and expand the reoccurring frequency of impactful and favourite activities.

ESTABLISHING ORGANIZATIONAL AGENDA

The five pillars of the Social Innovators workspace manifesto are adapted from the globally accepted Coworking manifesto that is based on mutual respect, trust, collaborative action, know-how sharing and support. The five-pillar manifesto can be adapted but needs to be included both in the external (i.e. website, newsletter, etc.) as well as in the internal promotional activities (i.e. within the workspace, on community-oriented events, etc.) in order to gain visibility.

TABLE 6

The five pillars of Social Innovators manifesto
Source: partially adapted from Seet (2019).

VALUES
Mutual benefits by collaborating before work individualisation
Knowledge sharing before monetization of expertise
Community before alienation
Active group participation over passive observation
Informal ties before the formalization of relationships

ESTABLISHING MEDIATION ACTIVITIES

Mediation activities can be planned to some extent, as different workspace users will have different expectations. The following table, therefore, lists examples of community-oriented events that will assist SI workspace operators to build an internal community.

TABLE 7

Examples of mediation activities through events
Source: own.

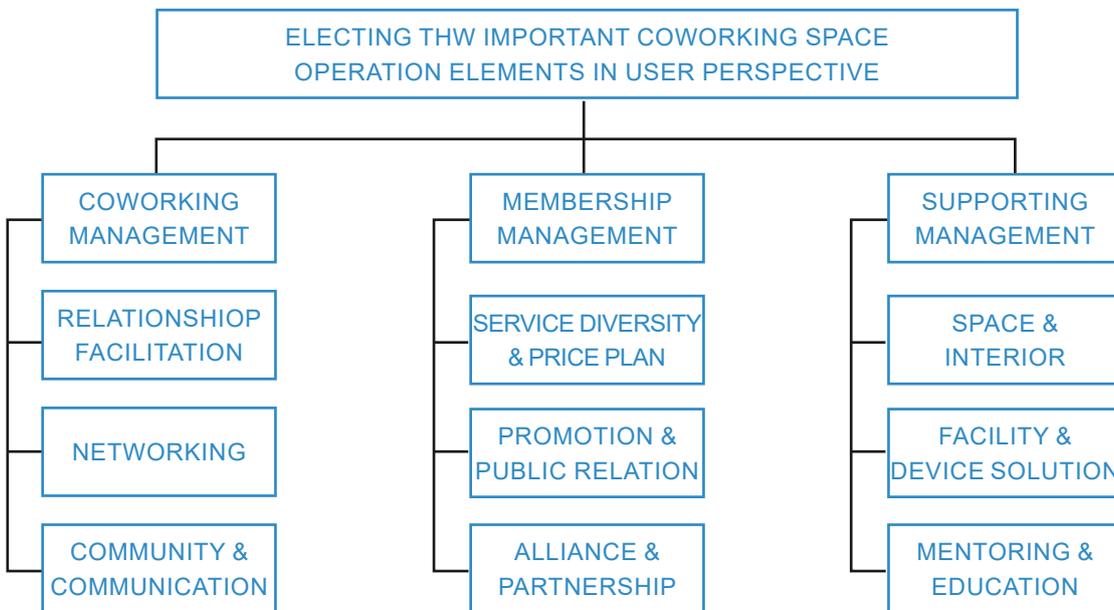
EVENT	Description	When to do it
PRESENTATION DAYS	Members can present their work to other workspace users. Presentations can be followed by feedback on how a) work projects can be enhanced and b) how other workspace users could potentially help	Upon the demand

EDUCATIONAL CLASSES	Allocate unique expertise amongst workspace users and ask them to have a lecture on the topic	1x month
GROUP DISCUSSION	Organize a group discussion on how to enhance operational processes behind the selected SI workspace and how to adapt workspaces & services to their needs	1x month
STAND-UP SESSIONS	Support informal gatherings by inviting members to show off their talents, share their (travel) stories, etc.	1x month
COMMUNITY BREAKFASTS & LUNCHES	Organize community breakfasts and lunches where members can get together and have an informal gathering before the start of their workday	1x week
HAPPY HOUR EVENTS	Organize leisure, non-formal gathering over a beer or any other beverage	1x week
COMMUNITY SPORT ACTIVITIES	Support the development of inner (e.g. community yoga classes) or outdoor sports activities (e.g. hiking)	1x month
MEETUPS	Support the development of specialized content that a group of your members might be interested in (e.g. programming meet-up, etc.)	Upon the demand
GAME NIGHTS	Organize a game night (e.g. boardgame night, video game competition, table-tennis tournament, etc.) that foster cooperative action	1x month
ELEVATOR PITCHES	Enable members to practice elevator pitches before presenting their services or products to investors	Upon the demand
LAUNCH GATHERINGS	Enable members to have the (pre) launch of their products or services in your workspace	Upon the demand

3.4 EVALUATION PROCESSES

The model for *Social Innovators* workspace follows Seo et al. (2017) framework of operationalization and has roughly nine operation elements that are grouped into three segments. These segments will assist your local SI workspace in identifying and measuring key performance indicators (KPIs):

1. Coworking management / General managerial level
2. Membership management / Micro managerial level of user base
3. Supporting management / Supporting services



Evaluating general management, KPIs need to be measured on a monthly or bi-monthly basis by:

1. Clearly identifying business objective & annual goals by determining business metrics with reliable indicators that will enable you to measure SI's financial streams.
2. Track income & spending by closely following local SI's financial revenue. Establish a firm business plan and predict investment costs.
3. Determine how to enhance the business impact of metrics that are the driving factors of financial sustainability.
4. Dissemination, networking and communication activities for the general promotion of your workspace should be measured by local SI's promotional activities. Email marketing can be determined by a net new number of subscribers to your mailing list with open and click-through rate measurable by automatized services such as MailChimp (an automated, cloud-based emailing service) for example. The number of visitors and general traffic through organic search should be tracked via the local SI's website.

Setting KPIs for membership management can be more complex. Based on other practices within the industry (e.g. Chatterton, 2018b; Russo, 2018), the suggestions are as follows:

1. Understand the total member revenue per month. How many members are there in the space? What is their turnover? How many new members per month do you have and what is the percentage of member retention? What are the most popular membership packages? What is the average member revenue per month? Clearly collect and evaluate these numbers every month. You may use a simple Excel or Google Sheet to track this data or up-

FIGURE 3
Hierarchy of coworking space operation elements
Source: Seo et al. (2017).

grade the system with one of the designated coworking software (e.g. Habu, etc.).

2. Measure and evaluate member acquisition KPIs. What is the number of direct requests through various listings (e.g. Google Business, etc.)? What is the number of introduction tours that potential members have taken part in? What is the most efficient and impactful way of promoting the local SI workspace?
3. Build up partnerships and discretely measure the impact on your a) workspace and b) community. How is the partnership with x entity helping us to build up our community? What are the indirect financial benefits of a partnership with them? How can we enhance our collaboration? What are the future goals of our cooperation? Are there any impacts of this partnership on local society?

Supporting management is essential for further development of SI workspace and its community. Therefore, understanding how the workspace operates and how individual users perceive your supportive mechanisms is crucial and needs to be both measured and compared between all three SI workspaces.

Appendix 1 contains a six-page questionnaire that should be distributed amongst workspace users within the specified timeframe. The first part contains the general information that will enable all three SI workspaces to compare the demographic data of their user bases. Second part traverses into exploring workspace interaction – users will be asked to determine the frequency of interactions and engagements with other users. Third part will ask them to subjectively assess the supportiveness of your workspace personnel (i.e. community managers) with the fourth part containing three different scales: productivity scale will assist SI operators in determining the levels of productivity of their members, scale for perceived inspiration will abet to assess the level of inspiration that emerges upon using a selected SI workspace, while the social life scale will help workspace operators to assess the levels of well-being.

The collected data should be analysed with studying simplified correlations by using the polychoric correlations to generate a correlation matrix and measure associations between predictors and all of the separate items. The findings should be summarized in an internal report and compared with the data from other SI workspaces.

TABLE 8
Timeline of evaluation

ACTION	Timeline	Description
TRACKING OF THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT KPIS	Monthly basis	Track and assess the financial and operational challenges of your workspace by identifying and measuring relevant KPIs.
TRACKING OF THE MEMBER MANAGEMENT KPIS	Monthly basis	Track and asses member management and its impact by identifying and measuring relevant KPIs.
1ST SURVEYING OF WORKSPACE USERS & EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF SUPPORTIVE SERVICES	6th month	Survey workspaces users by distributing the attached questionnaires. Analyse the collected data.
2ND SURVEYING OF WORKSPACE USERS & EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF SUPPORTIVE SERVICES	12th month	Survey workspaces users by distributing the attached questionnaires. Analyse the collected data. Draft a report with the key findings.
1ST DATA COMPARISON	13th month	Compare the findings between all three SI spaces, discuss associated challenges and draft measures that will improve the impact of your local SI workspace.
3RD SURVEYING OF WORKSPACE USERS & EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF SUPPORTIVE SERVICES	18th month	Survey workspaces users by distributing the attached questionnaires. Analyse the collected data.
4TH SURVEYING OF WORKSPACE USERS & EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF SUPPORTIVE SERVICES	24th month	Survey workspaces users by distributing the attached questionnaires. Analyse the collected data. Draft a report with the key findings.
2ND DATA COMPARISON	25th month	Compare the findings between all three SI spaces, discuss associated challenges and draft measures that will improve the impact of your local SI workspace.
5TH SURVEYING OF WORKSPACE USERS & EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF SUPPORTIVE SERVICES	30th month	Survey workspaces users by distributing the attached questionnaires. Analyse the collected data.
6TH SURVEYING OF WORKSPACE USERS & EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF SUPPORTIVE SERVICES	36th month	Survey workspaces users by distributing the attached questionnaires. Analyse the collected data. Draft a report with the key findings.
3RD DATA COMPARISON	37th month	Compare the findings between all three SI spaces, discuss associated challenges and draft measures that will improve the impact of your local SI workspace..

Source: own.

3.5 SUMMARIZING THE STEPS THROUGH A SIMPLIFIED ROADMAP

Design a functional workspace

1. Within the initial phase before the opening, divide the workspace into workspace area, leisure & event area and a dedicated meeting room area.
Establish a diverse work ground.
2. Within 6–12 months after the opening, gather user feedback and adapt the workspace on the grounds of members' expectations.

Establish and maintain a capable and well-trained operational team

Establish a team that will be handling the introduction of the new members into the workspace community, will be taking care of the space, will build a healthy community ecosystem through fostering interactions and offering support and will gather informal feedback from community members in order to improve the workspace services and the workspace design.

Evaluataion process

Identify and measure key performance indicators (KPIs) for general managerial level, micro managerial level of user base and supporting services. Adapt workspace and services in order to improve performance of your key activities.

Create and adapt a functional membership management system

Establish membership packages with different values and streams of services. Create a workspace sale funnel that will ease up the process of the workspace user's sign-up. Plan mechanisms for member retention with implementation of collaborative organizational culture and well-planned mediation mechanisms that will enable your workspace to build-up a supportive community.

“The industry is young. The future is bright.”

Steve King, Emergent Research, at the Global Coworking Unconference Conference

Following the King’s quote, the future of collaborative workspace is indeed bright. The industry is becoming diversified and the Social Innovators workspace model might spring as an innovative and sustainable archetype of a progressive of-fice system.

There are several points what will, however, need to be taken into account when opening the spaces. Firstly, selected workspaces that will host Social Innovators work grounds will need to be perceived as highly creative. Following the coworking space framework, workspaces will need to be highly flexible and adaptable with functional work and leisure areas and well-planned activities. Secondly, social elements will need to be adapted in a way that will foster innovative and collaborative-oriented social climate within the workspace. Both sets of factors will need to be adapted in a way that will support the opportunities for recognition and positive exploitation of their communities. Following the selected pathway, Social Innovators model has high prosperity to evolve into an innovative model that could be replicated in other cities and countries globally.

The presented guidebook – or a walkthrough manual, if you prefer – is a sole base stone of your future operations. Social Innovators workspaces will look much different in three years from now and their user bases will narrate their future. Therefore, let them as much freedom of expression as possible and let them co-create the work grounds.

04 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

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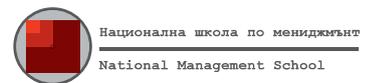
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