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In addressing the question about the potential of the kitchen in the workplace, we found it useful to refer to recent history in terms of how we use domestic spaces. Over the twentieth century, the kitchen evolved from being a separate, utilitarian space dedicated to activities related to food, to become the heart of the house in an open-plan configuration which worked on both a practical and social level. At the same time, office space evolved from an efficient 'type pool' and office cubicles to something more akin to the living room of a house with soft furnishings and flexible break-out areas.

If we compare the transformation of these two types of spaces, it is evident that the uses have become more fluid and have evolved to encourage communication between their users. It makes sense that merging the two typologies – by placing the kitchen at the heart of the workplace – could be beneficial in the working environment, and trigger more meaningful interactions via such activities as cooking together and having indoor and outdoor facilities to enjoy meals as a group.

However, having a fully functional kitchen in the heart of the office creates some issues, such as noise, smells and dirty dishes, as well as the fact that it will be used primarily during lunchtime.

These problems could be tackled by well-designed ventilation and an efficient layout which could include moveable partitions capable of concealing the kitchen space from the office when it's not in use, leaving core facilities for tea/coffee/snacks and a dining/meeting table exposed. This arrangement would allow a more flexible solution, where a balance of work and recreation could be adjusted by the occupants throughout the day according to their needs. To have a cooking experience that is not burdened by washing-up afterwards, a mechanised system could be installed that removes dirty dishes to be cleaned in one central location rather than incrementally across the building.



If we imagine these 'kitchen hubs' in multiple locations on the floorplate across several levels of a building, then it becomes clear that an infrastructure must be created. Areas will be needed to hygienically store food, crockery and cutlery, which could be aided by communal 'pantries' on the ground floor, where the occupants can access fresh supplies each day. Rooftops and terraces can be used for communal meals, as well as offer opportunities to create gardens where herbs and vegetables are grown.

In summary, we would promote the idea that workspaces provide an informal and comfortable environment where people can have fun cooking with (and for) their workmates. To enjoy healthy and sustainable meals while still running an efficient business would be a desirable scenario for the future of the kitchen in the workplace.



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