

# PAUSE FOR THOUGHT



**PJ Statham**  
Owner, Momentum

**How long have you been in the world of workplace?** Since 1980 – rather a long time!

**What is the single biggest thing that has changed since you started?**

Technology has changed the way everyone works.

**Is the workplace better now or is it a case of emperor's new clothes?** Both...

technology has created easier ways of working but it also leads to communication breakdowns and fewer direct conversations. It allows people to hide and that cannot be good.

**Are clients more knowledgeable about products and design?** They like to think they are more aware,

simply because there are so many products on the market that, if they know a few, they appear to be experts. Designers and architects need to work harder to learn what is available, how and why it is designed and how it is made. I think our industry has either become a bit lazy with research or the pressure to meet deadlines determines the eventual design, not the ideal for anyone.

**If it is possible, ignore Brexit (because it seems no one can predict that) what will be the biggest impact on the workplace sector in 2019?** 'New ways of working' is the term I prefer as companies evaluate their workspaces.

**Do you expect the market to continue the impressive raise of the last five years?** It might slow down a little, but technology is changing faster than furniture can keep up, so developments will be needed.

**Do you expect the position of the facilities manager to change and grow in importance?**

It will change, but someone still has to manage the assets. Buildings are costly, so they need to be efficient.

**Is the Gen X,Y,Z & millennial terminology helpful for understanding or lazy stereotyping?** Lord David Willetts made some interesting comments about this – that if we

do not understand the differences

and the impending problems, we will fail the subsequent generations.

**How do we step away from a 9-5 working week construct together?** This is a tough one unless we change school timetables and holiday periods. It is the case though, that work practices are allowing greater flexibility, but meetings can really only take place when people are available at the same time!

**If you had one contribution to make to making things just a little better over the next decade, what would it be?** I would ask people to research and check for alternatives to the first furniture they find and avoid copies; support original designs.



**Dean Kuch**  
Managing Director, Thinking Works

**How long have you been in the world of workplace?** 33 years.

**What is the single biggest thing that has changed since you started?** Emails – whatever happened to talking to colleagues and trusting they'll do what they say instead of trying to trap them by putting everything in an email?

**Is the workplace better now or is it a case of emperor's new clothes?** It's easier to research, and the Internet has helped everybody become an 'expert' on any given topic, but, we seem to get less 'work' done now than before.

**Do you expect the market to continue the impressive raise of the last five years?** Yes, but I think it will start to slow in the next 18-24 months.

**Who is accountable for wellbeing in the workplace?** Human Resources departments in larger organisations and Managing Directors in smaller organisations.

**How do we step away from a 9-5 working week construct together?** I think, to some extent, we already have – the working day starts at home for a lot of people before they get to the office, and a lot of people work late or work from home into the evening too.





**How many more years of casual sexism in workplaces do we have before that dies a death?** Depends

however long I'm alive!!! I

think we'll see sexism diluted

greatly in the next 10 years, however,

there will be traces of it for many years to come.

**If you had one contribution to help make things just a little better over the next decade what would it be?**

To make the work environment better for the workers. To give them back some of what's been taken away with open plan offices. To give them somewhere they belong – and want to belong.



**Mark Hickey**

Owner, Ultimate Group

**How long have you been in the world of workplace?** Over 20 years.

**What is the single biggest thing that has changed since you started?**

Technology – who would have thought you could work from your mobile device away from the office. Also, working flexibility and trust within the workplace.



**Is the workplace better now or is it a case of emperor's new clothes?** It's definitely better and what we hear from our end user clients is that staff retention is testament to this with recruitment costs down.

**Are clients more knowledgeable about products and design?** Absolutely. We usually find that a company will engage a champion within their organisation to research working environment trends beforehand. We also see evidence of user group feedback at initial consultation stages from within organisations, which confirms that the employer is more open to change.

**What will be the biggest impact on the workplace sector in 2019?** Staff wellbeing, such as a better understanding and acceptance to mental health, not just physical.

**Do you expect the market to continue the impressive raise of the last five years?** I see no signs of it stagnating or any uncertainties. I think once Brexit becomes old news, it will be business as usual.

**Who is accountable for wellbeing in the workplace?** It starts from the top and should be encouraged in the environment you own or create. If you give them the tools and – sometimes more importantly – your time, you will see a big difference, which will then be embraced by all. You don't need a separate department or person to be accountable for this.

**Do you expect the position of the facilities manager to change and grow in importance?** Like all roles, they are being amalgamated into other roles, so people are having to multitask jobs and workloads.

**Is the Gen X,Y,Z and millennial terminology helpful for understanding or lazy stereotyping?** The latter – I'm old school. I often think it's unnecessary terminology.

**How do we step away from a 9-5 working week construct together?** Flexible working and trust for staff within the workplace. Giving staff the freedom to get their work done in an environment that inspires them and not just a 9-5 office where they clock in and clock out.

**How many more years of casual sexism in workplaces do we have before that dies a death?** It will die a death over the next five years as the next generation reach management posts.

**What are the opportunities that we will regret taking?** Working from home all too often, people will lose the ability to communicate face-to-face.

**If you had one contribution to help make things just a little better over the next decade what would it be?** Electric cars should be compulsory – and get a Politician to answer a question with a direct answer!

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**Tim Gledstone**  
Partner, Squire and Partners

**How long have you been in the world of workplace?**

All my working life, which is 22 years. As an architecture practice, our offices have always acted as a showcase to our clients, so we naturally think about how design impacts people within the company as well as those looking in.

**What is the single biggest thing that has changed since you started?** The demand and appreciation of end user design, addressing the specific needs of businesses and their employees. Our designs are targeted for every client, which range from UNISON to Ministry of Sound.

**Is the workplace better now or is it a case of emperor's new clothes?** Generally it's been changing for the better, with clients appreciating the value good design adds to every aspect of the workplace.

**Do you expect the market to continue the impressive raise of the last five years?** Yes, with the quality of vision retained – this will impact on workspace design to raise the standard expected by tenants.

**Who is accountable for wellbeing in the workplace?** The people, when they demand it.

**Do you expect the position of the facilities manager to change and grow in importance?** It's a dead job in its traditional format. The role should be seen more like a hotel GM or concierge, managing departments within organisations, creating events for building occupiers, providing good quality food and drink, booking sessions for the gym/spa.

**How do we step away from a 9-5 working week construct together?** Respect responsibility and base performance on delivery. We should also be designing for before 9am and after 5pm, with

wellbeing and social experiences bookending the traditional working day.

**If you had one contribution to help make things just a little better over the next decade what would it be?** Creating workspaces that inspire confidence and happiness, and foster a collaborative community, which are interested in helping one other rather than competing with one another.



**Shaun Rossington**  
Operations Director, UBI

**How long have you been in the world of workplace?** I started as an installer in 1991 – so nearly 28 years.

**What is the single biggest thing that has changed since you started?** Probably product choice. I mean, in the 90's there was probably no more than 3-4 suppliers involved – now you find 10-20+ on some projects.

**Are clients more knowledgeable about products and design?** Definitely! They have the tools to really investigate their product selection and suppliers have really committed to showcasing their products.

**Do you expect the position of the facilities manager to change and grow in importance?** Definitely – it has already. They now need to understand product and design as well as technology in the ever-evolving interiors world.

**If it is possible, ignore Brexit (because it seems no one can predict that) what will be the biggest impact on the workplace sector in 2019?** Wellbeing. Work, for most, can mean never escaping, so getting a balance will be a big focus next year. We need more 'away from the desk and chilled-out collaboration areas'.

**Do you expect the market to continue the impressive raise of the last five years?** It's got to slow down? But then office furniture just doesn't have the life-span that it did have and companies are adapting to change sooner, trying to outperform their competitors, even with interiors.



**Stephen Collins**  
Sales Director, Workstories

**How long have you been in the world of workplace?** I have been in the world of workplace for 17 years and I've seen many changes over this time, from cellular offices to the advent of open plan and open transparent working environments. Technology has also changed over the years, which is becoming a focal point in the workstation setting.

**Is the workplace better now or is it a case of emperor's new clothes?** I feel the workplace has evolved to better meet the needs and requirements of the contemporary worker mix – how they want to work and what they expect from their workplace.

**Are clients more knowledgeable about products and design?** Design is certainly more accessible now. There is a greater awareness of what is out there and, in turn, clients now know there are products and technology suited to their specific needs.

**If it is possible, ignore Brexit (because it seems no one can predict that) what will be the biggest impact on the workplace sector in 2019?** Technology is evolving at such a pace with regards to how we charge, how we communicate and how we meet. It will continue to evolve and we are confident that we will continue to develop in all aspects of the workplace to stay ahead of the curve.

**Do you expect the market to continue the impressive raise of the last five years?** The market is buoyant and we are forecasting that this trend will continue. However, the unknowns of Brexit will have an effect. How product is brought to the market is more important than ever.

**How do we step away from a 9-5 working week construct together?** Good design, products and a flexibility from employer and space.

