

On Creating Workspaces for a Team of Teams: Learnings from a Case Study

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Abstract Workspaces provide resources, facilitate (different) modes of working, and communicate an organization’s culture. As such they are a powerful resource to amplify the innovation culture of an organization.

Changemakers and leaders of organizations face the challenge to create workspaces that promote innovative activities of teams. Companies too often copy well-known best practice examples and the physical design of the workspace is put into focus. Organizational structures and context are disregarded and the inherent needs of an organization and employees are neglected. As a result, the workspace is used differently as initially intended and expectations are not met. A methodological approach to the creation of workspaces that fit the needs of their users and managers is still needed.

Impact Hub Berlin—a co-working space for social entrepreneurs, serves as example of a workspace that amplifies the collaborative culture of its community. The approach to the creation of its new workspace involves the integration of users from the beginning and, thus, the creation of a “shared ownership.” This concept, which can be applied to a wide range of contexts, provides the basis for a well-functioning, innovative work environment in line with specific organizational needs and objectives. This article provides an overview of insights gained through the exploration of the case.

1 Introduction

Globalization and the increase of interconnectedness through innovations in the fields of technology, communication and transportation change our world drastically and raise great challenges for people and organizations. This results in trends

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of dramatically increasing complexity (IBM 2010, p. 15) and speed (Mootee 2013, p. 3)—in particular at the workplace of knowledge workers. Instead of having one clear task, knowledge workers are confronted with a great variety of them to be managed simultaneously. Daily work is now characterized by fragmentation and disruption. With the opportunities provided by the information technology the role of the workspace is changing, and a fixed physical place is no longer necessary. At the same time, the well-educated and highly demanding ‘Generation Y’ is entering the labor market, for whom “the prospect of an entire working life within the same organization is more a nightmare than a life’s dream [and who] want to develop, learn, work project-based and in parallel.” (Dark Horse Innovation 2014, p. 23)

Organizations have to adapt accordingly and “establish effective workspaces in order to enable appropriate spatial interactions as well as to create physical environments for diverse innovation activities” (Moultrie et al. 2007, p. 53). Peters (1992, p. 413) goes even further and depicts space management as the most ignored and simultaneously the most powerful tool for implementation of cultural change and to foster innovation and learning within organizations.

However, well-grounded academic research on the attributes of effective work environments to support creativity and innovation is still missing. It “appears that firms create spaces based on instinct and personal judgment, rather than on genuine insights based on firm evidence” (Moultrie et al. 2007, p. 54). Persons in charge of establishing innovation spaces tend to neglect an analysis of the company’s and employees’ needs and interaction patterns; concepts are often copied from other companies meanwhile ignoring the own innovation culture. Each organization and its people have individual requirements. This means it is not sufficient to create an innovative ambiance by copying ‘best’ aesthetic practices from other ‘great places to work’ (Friedman 2014; Moultrie et al. 2007). This raises the question of how organizational leaders and change-makers can account for this. We try to tackle the problem by investigating how innovation spaces are created within organizations in order to identify patterns matching spatial structures with work processes in the field of innovation activities. By means of case-study analysis, we examine the network organization Impact Hub Berlin, as a best practice example. We seek to answer the following research question: What defines the spatial structures (physical/socio-organizational) of Impact Hub Berlin with regard to its initial strategic intent for creating the workspace? In this context, we apply Moultrie’s et al. (2007) model of creating innovation spaces as expressed in the practices of processual guidance and theoretical orientation.

2 Innovation Spaces in Organizations: Providing the Framework

Spatial factors that support the creative actions of teams have been identified in previous research (e.g. Amabile and Grysiewicz 1989; Deb and Sinha 2011; Dul et al. 2011). However, when it comes to an organization's capacity to foster innovation, the workspace needs to be viewed in terms of the work environment as a whole (Weinberg et al. 2014). The workspace entails physical as well as socio-organizational structures that need to be understood within their specific context.

Amabile's componential model for organizational innovation (1988; Amabile et al. 1996) provides the theoretical framework for evaluating the work environment in regard to its potential for innovation capacity building.

The model displays the link between the work environment, individual creativity, and organizational innovation (cf. West and Sacramento 2012). It shows how the work environment affects the relevant components that influence individual creativity. Amabile identified three crucial aspects when it comes to creativity: domain relevant skills in terms of factual knowledge and expertise; creativity-relevant skills, including strategies and cognitive styles that influence the idea generation, and a person's intrinsic motivation expressed as the genuine interest in a task (Amabile 1988). The latter is regarded as key when it comes to enhancing creative capacity and innovation since, as Amabile (1983) points out, intrinsic motivation differentiates between what one can do and what one actually will do.

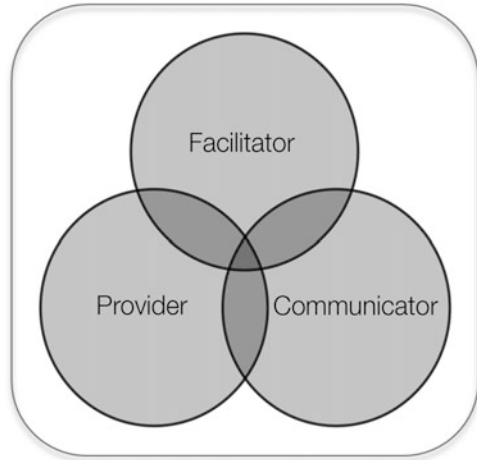
Accordingly, an organization's capacity for innovation is defined by its motivation to innovate, prevalent management practices that facilitate innovation within the organization and any resources provided to support creativity and innovation at work (Amabile 1988; Amabile et al. 1996). As a compound all three aspects shape the work environment of an organization. Consequently, we conclude that organizational innovation capacity is fostered by workspaces involving the three functional dimensions aligned towards innovation. First, an innovation space facilitates skills and work modes that are put into practice during the innovation process. Second, it provides physical and nonphysical resources in the form of knowledge and/or tools and materials that support innovation. Third, it communicates an image of the organizational culture that expresses its motivation to innovate (see Fig. 1).

2.1 Organizational Space

The concept of space is rather complex and elusive. In line with the spatial turn in organizational and cultural science (cf. Guenzel 2008) we apply a relational understanding of 'space' in our examination of the organizational workspaces.

Throughout the past centuries the concept of space developed from an absolute to a relative. Both were opposing for a long time. At the beginning of the twentieth century, especially with the theory of relativity, scientists realized that neither time

Fig. 1 Three conceptual dimensions of innovative workspaces in organizations

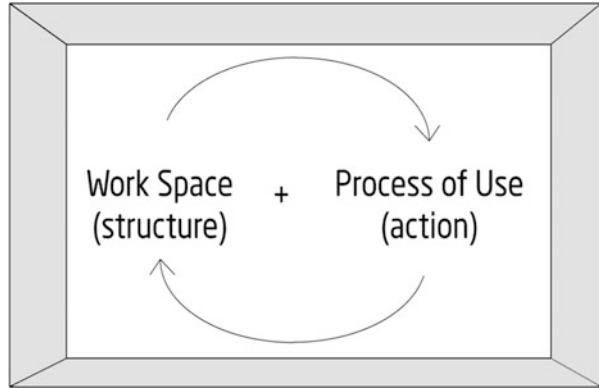


nor space is static leading to perception of space as being unsteady and in constant flux, until, in line with the so-called *spatial turn* (in the late 1980s), new concepts of space were developed, adding to the debate in the social sciences. (cf. Guenzel, 2008)

For our conceptual approach we use Martina Löw's (2007) relational theory of space. As relational concept, space is socially constructed and formed by acts, interactions and constellations of human beings. Löw's (2007) theory forms the basis to investigate the effects of space on teams and innovation processes. Introducing time as flexible dimension, space is no longer a rigid container. Moreover it is interconnected to the world of physical goods (Löw 2007; von Weizsäcker 1990). "The space depends on the reference system of the observer" (Löw 2007, p. 34), and thus becomes a context dependent and perpetually evolving and adapting concept. Löw further defines space as being a twofold phenomena, consisting of a "relational array/order of living organisms and social goods. Two processes to be differentiated analytically constitute space: spacing and synthesis" (Löw 2007, p. 159). Spacing describes the construction and positioning of objects, whereas perception, imagination and memory synthesize the space. The synthesis sums up human beings and social goods to spaces. Thus "space derives from the interaction of structure and action" (Löw 2007, p. 53) and is a co-creation of this reciprocity during its process of creating as illustrated in Fig. 2.

Recent theory of space is based on the findings of Henri Lefebvre, described in "La production de l'espace" (1974). Lefebvre describes (urban) space as differential space that is created by various social and functional elements. Lefebvre differentiates between perceived space, conceived space, and lived space (Lefebvre 1974). In comparison to Löw's (2007) aforementioned traits of space, Lefebvre neglects the impact of time on space and rather analyses different attributes of space existing simultaneously and overlapping one another. We assume that the close interlocking of the strategic level (conceived space) and the tactical level (perceived space) can promote the production of effective innovation spaces.

Fig. 2 Space as a relational concept



Linking Lefebvre’s understanding of the production of space to architectural space intended to promote innovation, Kornberger and Clegg (2004) assume: Effective innovation spaces mirror the characteristics of ‘generative buildings’. Opposing terminal architecture, in which form follows function and buildings are ordered, inflexible, uncommunicative and static, this conceptualization offers a balance of predictability and randomness, flexibility, communication resulting in problem generation and movement. Generative buildings organize the flows of communication, knowledge, and movement, which may result in the emergence of ‘surprises’. Furthermore, such facilities offer positive power of spatial organization and are places where inhabitants are ‘illegal architects’ who (ab)use and (re)define space. In line with Kornberger and Clegg (2004) we state that organizing the generative building means producing space that informs the space of innovation.

3 Research Design

We have chosen an exploratory case study approach to explore the area of collaborative workspace design. The case we examine is a co-working space for social entrepreneurs, the Impact Hub Berlin. We selected this case because it enabled us to examine the development process of an innovative co-working space with a collaborative approach at its different stages over time (longitudinal research).

The case study is designed based on the transitional framework developed by Moultrie et al. (2007). It covers the process of innovative workspace development in organizations. The model provides the basis to compare and evaluate workspaces created within organizations. In its original version, it focused on physical space. Based on our working definition and our research findings, we iterated Moultrie’s model and replaced ‘physical space’ with ‘work space’ (Fig. 3):

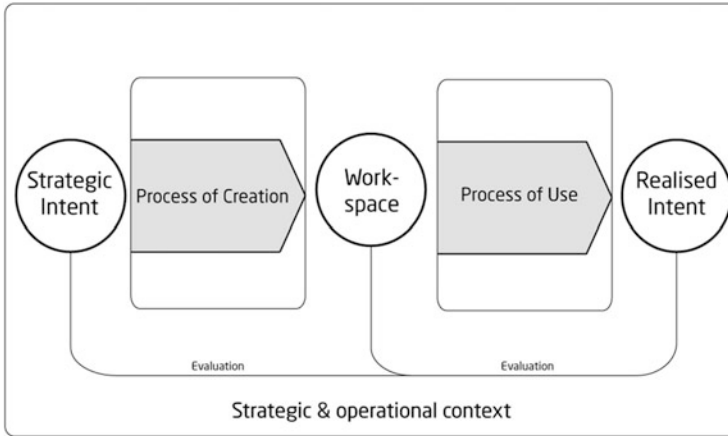


Fig. 3 Process of workspace development based on Moultrie et al. (2007)

3.1 *Field-Work: Document Analysis and Qualitative Interviews*

Our research is qualitative in nature, relying on the analysis of documents and interviews. In a first step, aimed at exploring the strategic intent preceding the workspace design, we conducted three semi-structured interviews with all three members of the management team, combining the flexibility of open-ended interviews with the intended directionality of the survey instrument. In constructing questions for the interview guideline, we followed the recommendations of Schensul et al. (1999, p. 154). The three interviewees are the co-founders of the Impact Hub Berlin and responsible for management, program and the process for spatial redesign. Consequently, we analyzed documents provided by the Impact Hub founding team, covering the collaborative design process. To gain a deeper understanding of the process of creating the new workspace, we also conducted a roughly 45 min group interview with all three founders together. Each interview lasted between 35 and 45 min and was recorded, transcribed, and analyzed by means of qualitative content analysis (cf. Mayring 2008). In a third step, we analyzed the designed structures of the workspace by means of on-site visits and non-participatory observation.

3.2 *Operationalization of Key Concepts*

Before clarifying the overall approach taken in this paper, the relevant key concepts have to be defined: *Creativity* is understood as generating ideas that are new and useful to the organization (Amabile 1988; George and Zhou 2002; Tierney and

Farmer 2002). “(*Innovation*) implicitly or explicitly includes the motion of creative ideas being successfully implemented by a larger group” (Amabile 1988, p. 127). Innovation refers to the implementation of such ideas (Amabile 1988; Anderson et al. 2004). Accordingly we apply the definition of *work-environment creativity* as “the tendency of employees within an individual work environment to produce novel ideas that are useful in an organization” (Scheepers and Van den Berg 2007, p. 2; cf. Amabile et al. 1996; Stein 1974; Woodman et al. 1993).

The concept of *strategic intent* originates from management studies. Hamel and Prahalad (1989, 2005) define it as “a [sustained] obsession with winning at all levels of the organization” (Hamel and Prahalad 2005, p. 150). Strategic intent goes beyond the strategic planning of deliberate actions and changes and entails objectives ‘for which one cannot plan’ (emergent phenomena) (ibid.). Building upon this, different scholars have transferred the concept of strategic intent to the academic field of organizational strategy. It is directed towards the future and resembles an organization’s intention by proactively activating all organizational levels for a common purpose (ibid.). Hence strategic intent serves the different parties within an organization as common, moving target to be reached in the future.

Organizational workspaces entail physical and socio-organizational structures. Structures are understood as any component of the organization that can be changed consciously or are designed with the intention to achieve a certain outcome, such as the facilitation of a specific action. Spatial factors can be categorized into the three-dimensional model, as introduced above: space as provider of resources, space as facilitator of processes as well as space as communicator of a (work) culture. For our conceptual approach, we apply a relational notion of space. The categories are to some extent overlapping because they are subject to ongoing sense-making processes by organizational members (Weick 1995). A definite categorization can only be done when taking into consideration not only the spatial factors, as designed structures within the space, but also the way they are actually interacted with by the users.

Moultrie’s et al. (2007) stance on creating space serves as our conceptual approach and guidance. In this context, we structure and present the data and findings in accordance with his suggested stages of: first—strategic intent, second—process of creation and third—the space created. Statements are invoked matching the three levels of process supporting the overall assumption of Impact Hub being a space to foster and enable innovation by the means of collaboration.

4 A Case-Study Example: Impact Hub Berlin

4.1 *Impact Hub Global*

Impact Hub Berlin is part of the Impact Hub Association, a global collaborative network with currently 66 local Impact Hubs and more than 10,000 active members worldwide. The overall vision of the global Impact Hub community is to create

positive impact around the world. Yet, “impact cannot happen in isolation. It requires collective action [. . .] through the combined accomplishments of creative, committed and compassionate individuals focused on a common purpose” (Impact Hub Global).

Collective action and the subsequent impact are cultivated in each Impact Hub according to three core elements: first, an connecting people from diverse backgrounds to create a community of social and sustainable entrepreneurship. Second, stimulating events provide the opportunity to learn and improve skills needed to achieve positive impact. Third, providing physical space, facilitating collaboration through a “flexible and highly functional infrastructure” (Impact Hub Global).

4.2 *Impact Hub Berlin*

As part of the global Impact Hub Association, Impact Hub Berlin launched its new co-creation space on May 1st, 2015 after a one-year preparation phase operating in a significantly smaller space. Serving as prototype, the precursor “Proto Hub” was seen as offering the opportunity to test ideas and assumptions regarding the creation of a work environment that successfully enables collaboration. This is a crucial element within the organizational concept of the Impact Hub Association. Within the founding team of Impact Hub Berlin, collaboration is regarded as the “basis to rethink economy” (Lässer) and given intrinsic importance as a work ethic in that “no decision is made alone” (Reiner).

4.2.1 Strategic Intent

In order to “shape the future of work life in general” (Kapretz) and “develop the sustainable economy of tomorrow” (Lässer), Impact Hub Berlin intends to become the center for social entrepreneurship in Germany. As such, Impact Hub Berlin functions as “a place where change-makers find a home to make ideas happen” (Reiner), based on its mission to foster “collaboration, trust and courage” (Kapretz).

In line with the Impact Hub Association’s three core elements, physical space plays an important role at Impact Hub Berlin. It is perceived as the “first step to develop further” (Lässer), an “anchor point” (Kapretz), and as the “body language of the organization” (Reiner). As such, physical space serves “flexibility and multi-functionality, providing inspiration, and enabling collaboration” (founding team, Impact Hub Berlin). Flexibility and freedom of physical movement create opportunities for interaction and thereby foster innovation:

We want a space where you can move, where you can develop a feeling of ownership, where you feel safe—to connect easily, think creatively and create new space. [. . .] We do not want a space that provokes the impression of being too perfect to move and change things—we strongly have to set the example ourselves. (Lässer)

Furthermore, to foster a culture of collective action, the organizational structure is generally non-hierarchical and promotes equal treatment for all. Subsequently, “there is no separate office for the Impact Hub team” (Kapretz) and “all the employees receive the same salary as [me], while having the same responsibility, at least concerning the workload” (Reiner).

4.2.2 Process of Creation

For Impact Hub Berlin another crucial factor in successful collaboration and innovation is learning. According to Reiner, the employees and co-workers at the Impact Hub:

Embrace failure and learn from it. The best example is the ‘Proto-Hub’. Furthermore, the founders see themselves as leaders, not as managers and trust in the expertise of others. If our intern has invested 2 days of working time for a project, I trust his ideas and reasoning. (Reiner)

The new workspace of Impact Hub Berlin was designed applying a user-centered and iterative approach. The community was engaged in the co-creation process consisting of a number of sessions providing the opportunity to test the ideas within several feedback loops (see Fig. 4).

The co-creation process was twofold. To ensure the user-centeredness of the outcome, the community was first asked to co-design the general interior structures of the space. Architects were involved as experts to translate the wishes and needs expressed by the community in a spatial design and to ensure the feasibility of their ideas. The community then gave feedback evaluating the ideas generated by the architects. Additionally, they also added their own wishes and needs. The second part of the co-creation process was the co-construction of the actual space, including the distribution of practical tasks among members of the organization. During this phase, the overall plan of the interior design was set, while details could still be adjusted. The founders’ intention was to create a feeling of ownership among the



Fig. 4 Participants during the creation process

community, triggering a thought such as: “I made this; it was my idea and I want to maintain it well” (Kapretz et al. 2015).

The founding team conducted extensive field research, with visits to different innovation and co-working spaces, including other Impact Hubs across Europe. The team succeeded in gaining an in-depth and shared understanding of crucial components of innovation spaces. This knowledge enabled them to filter the generated ideas according to basic parameters. They prioritized the large amount of ideas and identified those that appeared to be most useful in relation to their business model. However, they stated that their selection was also influenced by personal preferences regarding style and taste.

Reflecting on the outcome, it was stated that generated ideas were not necessarily different from those of the founding team. Yet, overall the co-creation process was perceived as a valuable tool to identify important aspects, contextualize ideas and validate assumptions. “We had 100 ideas, and those 20 that correlated with those of the community seemed to be the most important ones” (Kapretz et al. 2015). Furthermore, it was said that “co-creation is not a process carried out to end up with a cool space, but rather the starting point of a process that continues/is ongoing (...) it doesn’t stop when the doors open” (Kapretz et al. 2015). Another aspect mentioned was the potential of this approach, especially when repeated in several sessions, it creates a momentum and cohesion that—like a snowball-effect— attracts and retains attention of people over time. The founding team plans to involve the community also in future decisions: “Whenever there is something new coming up, or in case we want to change anything, we consult our community for agreement” (Kapretz et al. 2015). In order to actively encourage the community to take part in the further development of Impact Hub Berlin, regular “Town Hall” meetings are planned. These meetings will provide the opportunity to discuss wishes and suggestions concerning the space (Kapretz et al. 2015).

In general we identified a strong motivation to involve the community in all decisions within the Impact Hub. “We never plan anything remotely and then present it to our community top down. We do everything together with our community” (Lässer 2015). This approach is also important when it comes to the question of facilitating the use of the space. “The space is built together with the founding community, therefore they don’t need any instructions or facilitation but move around naturally and freely.” Hence, the founding community serves as role models for those who join later on. The host also takes a crucial role in facilitating collaboration: the host is “the connector” (Lässer 2015). “The kitchen and chill-out area act as non-human hosts” (ibid.).

4.2.3 The Workspace Design

The new workspace at Impact Hub Berlin can be seen in regard to its physical as well as non-physical structure. In line with our conceptual approach, identifying the designed structures of the workspace provides insight into the potential of the workspace as created to foster innovation activities. Based on the defined strategic

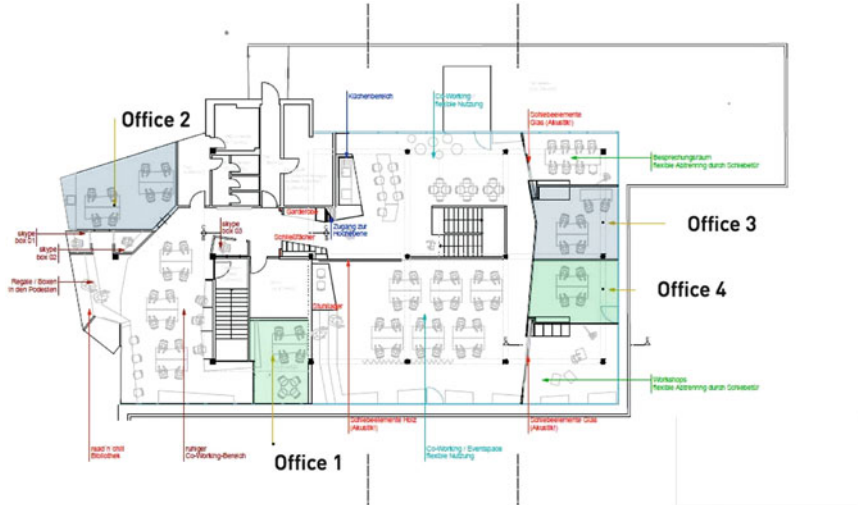


Fig. 5 Layout of Impact Hub Berlin

intent of Impact Hub Berlin, we focus on identifying spatial structures to foster collaboration as driver for innovation.

Physical features include the building’s given structure, the interior architecture, as well as the atmosphere and style created (see Figs. 5 and 6).

Further physical features include the resources provided, as well as the division of the space aimed at facilitating different work modes, including different physical set-ups. Regarding its location, the building occupies a prominent position close to the city center, thus offering easy access and proximity. This potentially facilitates collaboration with surrounding institutions and incoming visitors. Resources are provided to the community in the form of office supplies and kitchen utilities. As informal meeting points such facilities promote collaboration as well. The new location is much larger than the previous “Proto Hub” and provides enough space for different zones corresponding to various work modes and preferences.

As such, Impact Hub Berlin offers space for individuals as well as for teamwork and workshops (see Figs. 7 and 8). The style is rather neutral and bright, with lots of daylight and a natural appearance, underscored by wooden pieces. An open and welcoming atmosphere is fostered, in which flexibility also plays a crucial role. Tables and chairs are easy to move around and large wooden dividers are available to create smaller workspaces if needed.

The intended function of designed physical structures is strengthened and supported by non-physical aspects. These refer to the socio-organizational work environment, program and events, with the institutionalized host acting as facilitator. Regarding the organization of space, the different zones within the hub are named according to their designated use as: event space, workshop space, team offices 1–4, meeting room, dynamic and focused working area. However, although



Fig. 6 The workspace at Impact Hub Berlin: entrance area

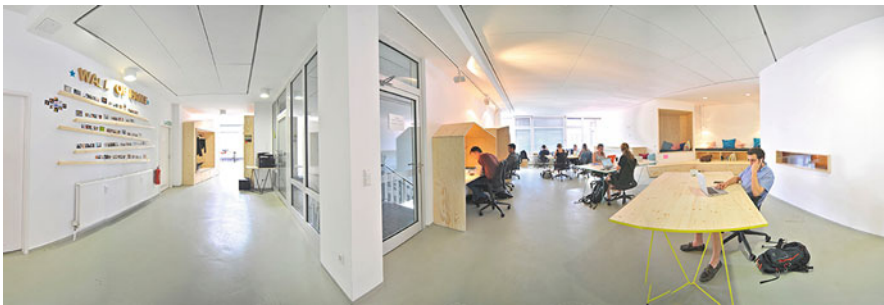


Fig. 7 The workspace: co-working space and the main hall



Fig. 8 The workspace: individual and teamwork facilitation areas

these names provide insight into the intended function of each work zone, the team is aware that the actual use might differ: “the names are rather functional—but we have to see if the spaces are used accordingly” (founding team—Impact Hub Berlin).

Other non-physical aspects communicate the organizational culture of Impact Hub Berlin. These include the organization’s flat hierarchy, the transparency of decision-making processes and the open access to everyone interested in visiting

Impact Hub Berlin. Concerning facilitation, the art of hosting plays an important role at Impact Hub Berlin, as well as within the global institution. The host not only welcomes visitors and responds to concerns and questions, but also fosters collaboration by connecting members and arranging regular events. The host is institutionalized by Impact Hub Global. The three core elements “connect participants and are brought to life through the art of hosting.” (Impact Hub Global). A host thus serves beyond the role of a receptionist, but (even more) connects people, operates as catalyzer for meaningful interactions between members, and organizes events to strengthen the community (Impact Hub Global).

Table 1 summarizes the identified key insights. We distinguish between the physical and the non-physical work-environment by using our three dimensional conceptual framework with the components of space acting as facilitator, provider, and communicator.

5 Learning from Practice

This case illustrates that workspaces designed for collaboration have a high potential to foster innovation. Besides physical structures, those that are socio-organizational are highly relevant concerning the facilitation of collaboration. Regarding the workspace as an interim stage and part of the creation process supports the objective to foster collaboration. Overall, we hypothesize that the identified organizational structures, as established at Impact Hub Berlin have a high potential to inform collaborative action.

It is interesting to notice that the management team of Impact Hub Berlin revealed a shared understanding of strategic intent, even though each of them highlighted different facets within the qualitative interviews. This commonly shared understanding of strategic intent is also prevalent in the co-creation sessions with the community and members of Impact Hub Berlin. The key imperative of “shared ownership” recurs for strategic intent, process of co-creation, and workspace design.

As this theoretical outline has demonstrated, a variety of approaches conceptualizing space co-exist. We do not evaluate nor judge either the dominance or importance of one of these theories over the other. However, in accordance with our case study, it appears that Löw’s (2007) and Kornberger and Clegg’s (2004) conceptualization of space provides the most suitable approach to frame our findings due to its holistic, comprehensive and relational perspective. As revealed by empirical evidence following the establishment of a clear strategic intent, the process of creating Impact Hub Berlin already incorporated traces of the reciprocity of structure and action, a stage earlier introduced and first put forward by Löw (2007).

Table 1 Impact Hub Berlin—Designed Structures to amplify collaborative culture

Physical work environment	
Facilitator	Location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close proximity to other companies and organizations • District not fully developed, potential
	Furniture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large wooden tables that are easy to push aside and move around • Ergonomic chairs on wheels to move easily • Focused areas supported by wooden dividers/cubicles
	Work zones/Work modes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Entrance/Host</i> (welcome, connect, introduce to culture) • <i>Focused Area</i> for teams & individuals • <i>Loud Collaboration</i> for individuals and teams • <i>Workshop</i> for collaboration/teamsprints/prototyping/exploring • <i>Nap Area/Terrace/Kitchen</i> for retreat and relaxation • <i>Kitchen/Terrace</i> for (informal) interaction/communication • <i>Event Space</i> for presentation, workshops, learning, sharing • <i>Meeting Space</i> for collaboration, sharing, presenting
Provider	Location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominent location in the center of the city, good infrastructure
	Architecture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ca. 600 m² space • Large open space and smaller team offices
	Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchen • Workshop space (incl. prototyping material) • Office supplies and facilities (printer, WiFi etc.)
Communicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large window fronts and outdoor space • Style & atmosphere • Neutral, flexible, clear, bright • Open, welcoming, at home feeling
Social-organizational work environment	
Facilitator	Host <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcomes visitors and new members • Shows and explains the space and its functions • Connects members to foster collaboration • Provides assistance for any concern coming from the community • Arranges member events on regular basis
Provider	Program & Events for Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community events on a regular basis • Workshops • Networking events etc.
Communicator	Organizational Structures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention given to maintaining a balanced community as reflected in member selection • No assigned workplace, freedom to move around, self-organized space • Open access to everyone • Part of global network • Non-hierarchical • Transparent decision-making • Participative management • Co-creation

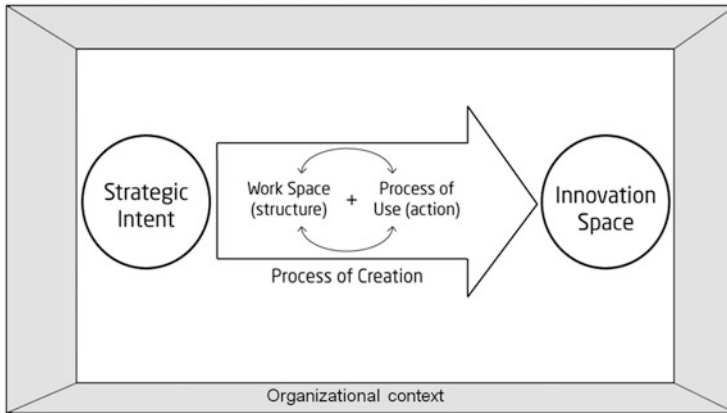


Fig. 9 Innovation space creation at Impact Hub [based on Moultrie et al. (2007)]

Furthermore, bearing in mind Kornberger and Clegg’s (2004) concept of innovation space as generative building, a collaborative approach is taken with the afore-mentioned imperative of “shared ownership.” Thereby, new workspaces are created as intended and the potential to turn the users into “illegal architects” of the work space by allowing them to “ab-use” the designed structures is shown. We thus argue for an iterated model of Moultrie et al. (2007) as shown in Fig. 9. The refined model focuses on the interaction of structure (workspace) and action (the process of use). The observed reciprocity is moved into focus of the process of creation. Thus, the established innovation space is the outcome of this process not an interim stage.

6 Concluding Remarks

Taking Moultrie’s et al. (2007) model as processual guidance, we revealed that Impact Hub Berlin’s procedure to create a workspace fostering innovation through collaboration bears promising potential. In this process we further deciphered and formulated an iterated version of the Moultrie et al. model, combining elements of Löw’s (2007) conceptualization of space and Moultrie’s et al. (2007) approach. We revisited the understanding of the process of creation of space by adding the reciprocity of structure and action. However, as this was a data-driven finding, our contribution has limitations. The iterated model applies and is closely related to the case of Impact Hub Berlin, whose findings can hardly be transferred to other cases without imperatives.

Nevertheless, as this study also sought to investigate how organizational leaders and changemakers can overcome imitating external best-practice examples meanwhile neglecting their company’s own structure and culture, when creating innovation spaces, the research attained further general results. Impact Hub Berlin’s

stance on facilitating the creation of workspace internally by accounting for its specific needs (of the organization and employees) demonstrates the importance of choosing the right procedure and process to successfully create novel innovative workspaces. More importantly this approach is completely in line with the organizational culture that is driven by collective action and its subsequent impact. Therefore the common theme of “shared ownership” is the key driver for the creation of (new) innovation spaces. Such findings can be applied to other cases and contexts providing the basis to frame the strategic process of innovation space creation within existing organizational culture.

Furthermore the case study of Impact Hub Berlin also reveals that besides the deliberate model of strategic planning reflected in the initial model developed by Moultrie et al. (2007), emerging strategies exist. This shows two ends of a continuum along which innovation space-strategies lie (Mintzberg and Waters 1985).

7 Further Perspectives

The initial Moultrie et al. (2007) model visualizes a coherent understanding of the creation of space in its entirety, comprising three major steps: initial strategic intent, interim space creation and the final realized intent. It follows a deliberate model of strategy. The Impact Hub Berlin’s example shows us the other end of the strategic continuum—an emergent model of strategizing (Eden and Ackermann 2013). Due to the recent opening of the space at the time of writing this article, the performance itself still needs to be assessed. For this aim, the further development of Impact Hub Berlin will be closely accompanied and regularly evaluated. An extension of our analytical framework would incorporate Moultrie’s approach on process of use and realized intent complemented with further supporting data derived from the cases studied. Furthermore, it could arguably enlarge our theoretical implications by applying Lefebvre’s three dimensions of space: the perceived, conceived and lived space level. In this context, comparable cases should be studied in order to gain a deeper understanding and insight into the field of collaborative workspaces. Another aspect to take into account is testing whether a similar concept of the workspace, and especially the process of creation, would be equally feasible and/or successful in a profit-oriented environment.

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