

# Workplace Insights

## Discovering What's Next in Workplace Solutions

As part of Hixson's decades-old policy of serving as an advocate for our clients (see blue band below), our firm does not promote products or services for any vendor. At the same time, the nature of our work requires that we have a deep knowledge of new and existing product and service options so that we can identify those that best meet a client's budget, performance, and design needs. Recently, members of Hixson's Workplace team took a trip to Michigan to visit office product manufacturer Steelcase at their Learning & Innovation Center. The visit was designed so that the Hixson team (which included Architects, Interior Designers and Engineers) could see current products in action, while hearing about the next generation of products that may benefit our clients.

### Hixson...A "No Bias" Firm

*Hixson is dedicated to serving as independent extended team members of our clients' organizations, treating their businesses as if they were our own. One of the most visible ways that we do this is by being 100% commercially neutral: We do not accept income or incentives - or sell/represent products - from any company, including equipment suppliers, contractors and others. This policy allows us to present recommendations and solutions that are unbiased, making sure that equipment and services stand on their own merits. It is called client advocacy and it is what you can expect every time you work with Hixson.*

Over the course of the day-long visit, Hixson was able to meet with Steelcase product experts and discuss a wide range of topics that are relevant in the design of workspaces, such as free address, data collection, open vs. closed offices, and more. The team also toured the company's showroom, where they experienced solutions for:

- Acoustics, including a soundproof glass wall system.
- Facility Mapping. Steelcase Live Map provides real-time information on the availability of rooms, desks and workspaces.
- Facility Data Collection. Steelcase Workplace Advisor is a cloud-enabled system that collects and analyzes data to provide organizations with meaningful insights about how their people work, and how their workplace can help them work more productively.

Beyond just seeing products in the showroom, the team was able to experience how Steelcase products and prototypes were being used in several actual Steelcase office environments. Hixson Senior Project Architect and Head of the firm's Workplace Business Unit Bryon Sutherly, CDT, AIA, said that this was particularly invaluable. "Being able to see how products were actively being used, by real people, in real time, definitely provided another level of insight."

In addition, the Hixson team participated in a noteworthy session with recognized workplace expert and author Tracy Brower, Ph.D., who serves as Principal of Applied Research & Consulting for Steelcase. Meeting with Dr. Brower was "enlightening," said Sutherly. "We were able to hear how Steelcase responds to workplace needs and issues, such as the agile office, through their design process, and how they ultimately arrive at a furniture solution."

So what does this visit mean for you? Even if your company is not an early adopter of workplace furniture solutions, it is important to recognize that most solutions are really created to solve an existing functional problem. Ultimately these products and solutions make their way to even the smallest of workplaces. Staying ahead and understanding the “why” for these solutions may help your workplace be prepared to adopt the solutions that make the most sense for your particular company’s culture, workforce, and space.

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