

a POI publication

why we work.

INSIGHTS

MAGAZINE

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POI

INTRODUCTION

From the Desks of Our Leaders



Jonas Scholl
Chief Executive Officer

When POI made the move to our new space, we termed it the LivingLAB. This monicker was about more than the space, it is our new cultural ethos. We are in beta mode. Always. The days of creating an office space and then leaving it alone for the term of the lease were gone. Uncertainty in the world governed our daily lives and the impact on workers and the workplace were changing too rapidly to be certain we would design the perfect workplace. Nobody had the answers, including us, and they still don't.

The only authentic way for us to learn about work in this environment was experimentation. We built an architecturally flexible workplace that could support constant change. We asked ourselves a few questions. How was our team using the space? Could we regularly tweak our space with minimal cost based on real data to better support them? If we did that, would they come back to the office without a mandate? Would they come back because they chose to be in the office? That was the hypothesis of our LivingLAB. We answered this hypothesis by collecting stories in the form of data that compelled us to make some changes. This magazine highlights some of these changes.

I hope you find our continuing LivingLAB story insightful.



Julie Hicks
Chief Brand Officer

Like most designers, I have been afflicted with the need to always find perfection in what I do and to get it right the first time. However, what has become glaringly clear in the last few years is that the lifespan of that 'right' solution is short. Employee engagement in a static workplace depreciates faster over time than it ever has before.

When designing our LivingLAB space we had to ask ourselves one question. Is today's perfection what we need to strive towards or is the right solution one that is flexible enough to accommodate how people, business or the world changes over time?

The first step for us in building a flexible workspace was embracing that continuous change was okay. The next was to ensure that this continuous change was achievable with nominal cost and could be executed quickly with minimal disruption to our workforce. The last thing was to include the implementation of tools that gave our people a voice and allowed for the collection of workplace data inform change within our space.

Today, optimizing our real estate is not about expanding and contracting our footprint, it is about leveraging data to understand our workspace, and how our people use it. This data allows us to predict and pivot when necessary to improve the utilization of all our spaces within the LivingLAB.

Now the best part of what we do is being able to share these insights with others.





INTRODUCTION

At the LivingLAB, we aim to do more than create workspaces—we strive to create spaces people want to go to.

When the LivingLAB was designed, we embraced the reality that workplaces need to evolve as rapidly as the businesses they support and the people who use them.

These insights are our response to the changes required to continue to successfully build, improve and evolve our workspace.

By leveraging both space data and anecdotal feedback, we gained a deeper understanding of how effective our initial layouts were in supporting the evolving work dynamics.

This continuous data collection and dialogue helped us identify specific areas for improvement, ensuring our spaces are not only functional but also purposeful spaces that are sought after by our team members.

LivingLAB

the data driven workplace

Collaborating Differently In The Open



Previous Application

The drive to create engaging and effective open collaborative workspaces goes beyond conventional designs. Recognizing that collaboration thrives not just in close quarters but also in openly accessible environments, a fresh look was taken at how spatial dynamics influence productivity and team interaction.

The initiative to revisit and reimagine these spaces grew from an understanding that the best solutions often come from evaluating how existing spaces serve the real-world needs of those who use them daily. This proactive approach has been crucial in evolving workspaces into areas that not only meet functional demands but also inspire creativity and collaboration.





Current Application

SOLUTION

Reimagining Our Spaces to Better Suit Our People

This space change was aimed at transforming traditional workspaces into versatile environments that support a variety of work modes and postures by using feedback and data from our people. The goal was to create spaces that people want to go to by adapting to the diverse preferences and needs of our people.



Current Application

The Library

The Library, once an infrequently used space with a team lounge setting, has been transformed into a vibrant hub for collaboration. The previous setting while supporting multiple postures did not offer support for large teams and territorial boundaries were not clear in this space.

To better facilitate teams, this setting was replaced with a large team table, creating a multifunctional space conducive to both group collaboration and parallel focus work. Equipped with amenities like digital presentation tools, whiteboards for brainstorming and easy access to power, this area now supports a blend of traditional and digital workflows.

These enhancements have breathed new life into previously underused areas, turning them into bustling centers of activity. The strategic redesign not only addresses the immediate functional needs of our team but also fosters creativity.

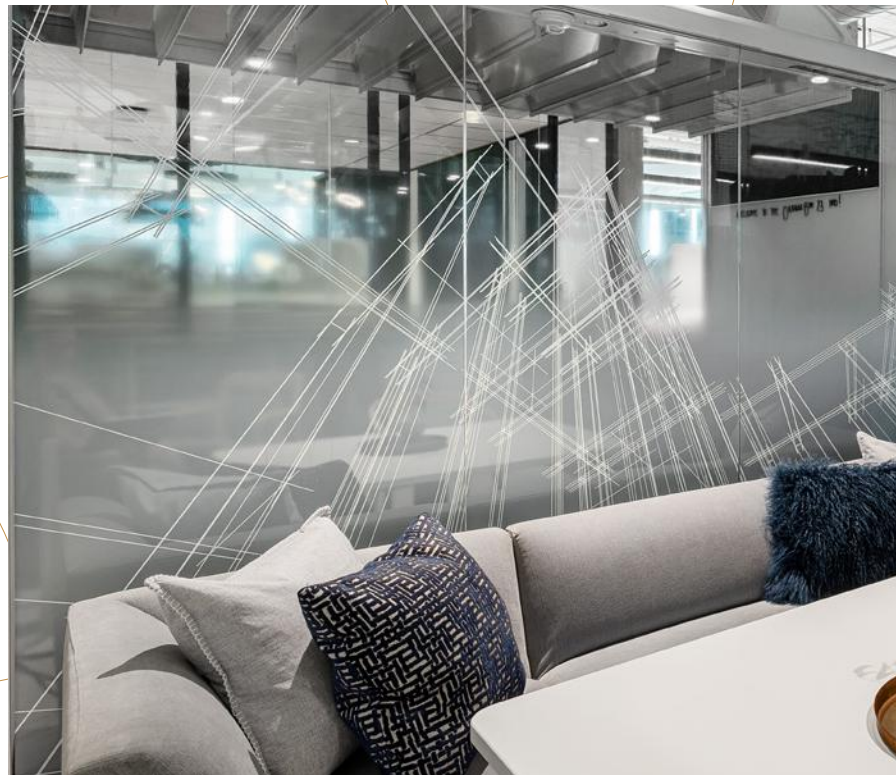
Three-Sided Privacy



Previous Application

Continued discussions revealed that concerns over sound privacy in open-plan areas were affecting more than just comfort—they were stifling collaboration.

Despite the use of advanced sound masking technologies, the fear of disrupting colleagues with overheard conversations led many to hold back in their collaboration. This perception affected not only their comfort but also their willingness to collaborate in the open. This feedback was pivotal, as it highlighted the need for a workspace that supports both privacy and collaboration without compromising one for the other.



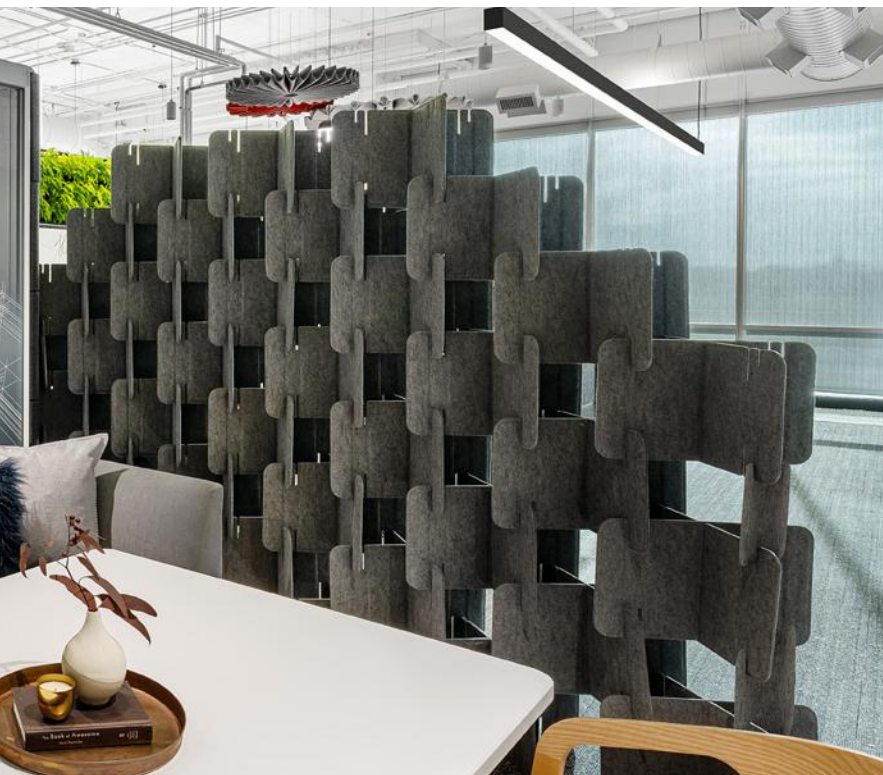
SOLUTION

Smart Design Enhancements to Foster Privacy and Openness

In response to these concerns, strategic enhancements were implemented to blend privacy within the open feel of the workplace. The solution added a sense of privacy without the need for more walls, striking a balance between open collaboration and individual focus.



Current Application



Current Application

The Retreat

Freestanding acoustic screens were added, and work pods in The Retreat were rotated to craft a space that offers privacy while maintaining a connection to the surrounding area. This newly designed nook is now outfitted with comfortable seating that promotes a more relaxed lounge posture, incorporates a large worksurface and allows access to power. The space is complete with analog tools like whiteboards and digital screens for content sharing or mixed presence experiences. This versatile space supports employees in transitioning smoothly between focused individual tasks and collaborative group activities and provides enough privacy to collaborate or focus without feeling isolated.

These thoughtful modifications significantly improve how open spaces are perceived and used. By listening to people and responding with tailored design changes, employers can craft a workplace that effectively balances the need for personal space with the advantages of an open layout. These types of improvements not only address the psychological impacts of working in open spaces but also enhance employee satisfaction and productivity. This assists workspaces to be better suited to meet the diverse needs of teams, making it a place where everyone can feel productive, secure, and connected.

Geography Matters



Previous Application



Previous Application

Feedback uncovered an initial desire for more workstations, however, further analysis revealed that this was simply a symptom of a different need— as workstation availability in the space was in fact rarely in question. Individuals expressed a preference for more workstations in areas they favored, while functional teams indicated a need for larger neighborhoods equipped with additional workstations. This layout would support parallel focus work, similar to their experiences before COVID-19 when entire teams worked together in the same location.

This insight highlighted the critical importance of understanding the psychological nuances and geographic preferences influencing the office layout.



Current Application

SOLUTION

Strategic Spatial Redesign for Enhanced Team Dynamics

A strategic redesign of the North Neighbourhood was undertaken to enhance proximity and facilitate communication while maintaining the same number of workstations. The redesign also prioritized providing teams with a space to focus work together effectively.

Bringing Teams Together

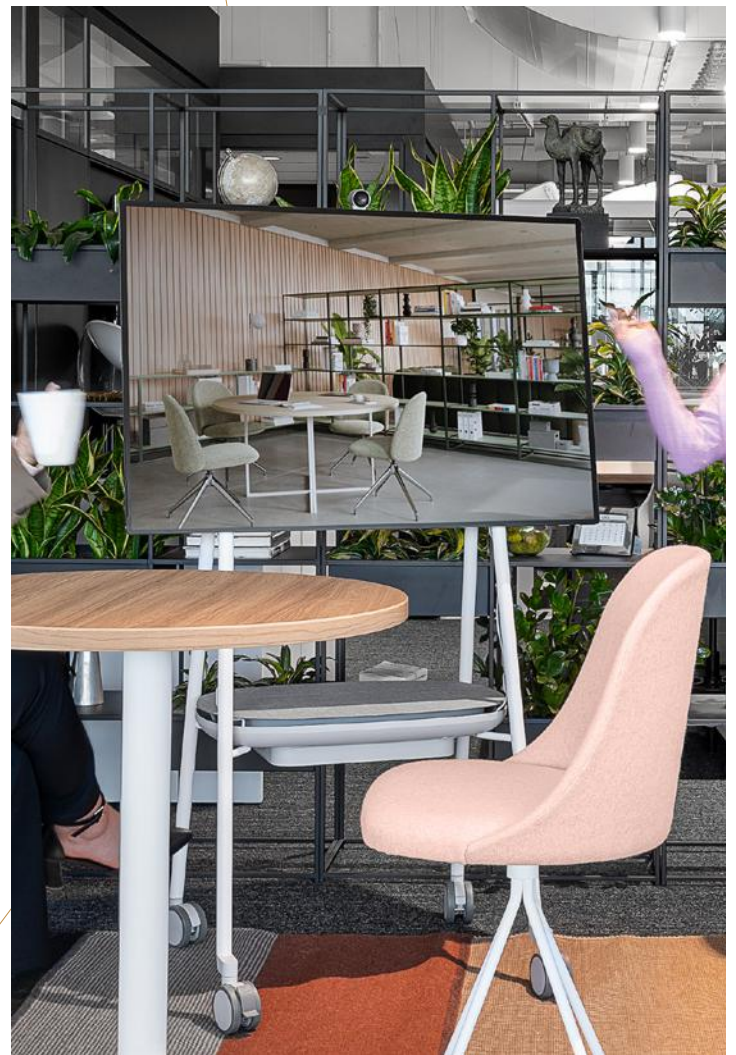
With the relocation of the centralized Resource Library, the existing 18 workstations were reorganized to enhance proximity and facilitate seamless communication. The new neighbourhood layout now brings all 18 workstations together to support the parallel focus work and team connection that employees were craving. This neighbourhood also now contains a variety of seating arrangements from individual lounge seating to traditional workstations and includes a central team table to support quick shifts between both individual tasks and team collaboration. This change has fostered a natural flow of interaction, built a stronger sense of community and promoted the ability for teams to focus work together within this space.

Integration of Flexible Meeting Technologies

To complement the physical redesign, state-of-the-art meeting technologies such as mobile digital displays and whiteboards were introduced into the space. These tools are seamlessly integrated into the shared meeting space, enhancing functionality and supporting both spontaneous and structured interactions.

The redesign has not only optimized the use of space but also markedly improved team morale and engagement. By addressing both the psychological and geographic factors of workspace design, POI has transformed the North Neighbourhood into a vibrant, inclusive environment that better serves the needs of every worker.

Current Application



Community Dining



Previous Application

In a predominantly free-address workplace, like the LivingLAB, the importance of fostering strong social interactions and building community is more critical than ever. Employees expressed an increasing demand for opportunities that allow for meaningful social experiences at work. This wasn't just about enhancing socializing; it was about creating a space that promotes the building and strengthening of relationships and cross-functional team building.

SOLUTION

Redesigning the Work Café for Enhanced Community Engagement

Redesigning the Work Café dining area, created a versatile space that supports community interactions with the opportunity for social, focus and collaboration experiences, allowing for a variety of work modes and function all day.



Current Application

Expansive Communal Dining

The heart of the Work Café hosts a large new dining-style table, which serves as more than just a dining spot. It doubles as a central hub for casual meetings and collaborative work, equipped with access to power to support digital tools that facilitate collaborative tasks and impromptu discussions.

Diverse Seating Options

Understanding that work and interactions vary, a variety of seating that supports multiple postures provides a range of choices for teams and individuals. These areas are perfect for those seeking a less formal setting for quick tasks, meetings, or simply enjoying a break.

The enhancements to the Work Café not only addressed the logistical needs of dining and working but also significantly improve the overall atmosphere and culture of the workplace. By crafting spaces that promote both social and professional interactions, the LivingLAB has created an active inclusive environment that keeps pace with the evolving nature of workplace culture.

The Sandbox



Previous Application

The Sandbox embodies a holistic application of multiple insights, specifically addressing "Collaborating Differently in the Open" and "Three-Sided Privacy." This space illustrates how thoughtful design can meet diverse needs, facilitating both open collaboration and the necessary discretion for focused work.

By integrating these dual insights, The Sandbox serves as a prime example of how flexible environments can adapt to both macro and micro changes, offering solutions that keep pace with evolving business and personal requirements.



Collaborating Differently in the Open

The transformation of the Sandbox from a casual lounge to a structured 'scrum' area with standing height and bench seating supports dynamic interactions and agile workflows. This change caters to the digital and flexible needs of today's workforce, maintaining an inviting atmosphere with subtle residential warmth. Such modifications have reinvigorated this space, turning it into a center for spontaneous collaboration and innovative thinking.



Current Application

Three-Sided Privacy

In addition to fostering open interactions, The Sandbox was enhanced with freestanding acoustic privacy screens. These additions subtly increase privacy without the imposition of full barriers, supporting a variety of work styles and needs. The space is now equipped to facilitate both spontaneous team discussions and private calls, greatly reducing the necessity to find completely enclosed rooms for confidential conversations. This flexibility helps maintain the flow of work and conversation, making daily interactions more comfortable and productive.

The enhancements made to The Sandbox have not only revitalized this area but have also demonstrated the effectiveness of multiple insights in one space.

By addressing both the need for collaborative openness and privacy, The Sandbox demonstrates how environments can be tailored to support the shifting dynamics of work practices effectively. These changes showcase the LivingLAB's commitment to spaces that are not only functional but also inspire creativity and a sense of belonging, ensuring that the workspace continues to meet the diverse needs of its occupants.

Through such thoughtful design, LivingLAB continues to lead in creating workspaces that truly reflect the dynamic nature of work, ensuring they are places that employees value and look forward to engaging with every day.

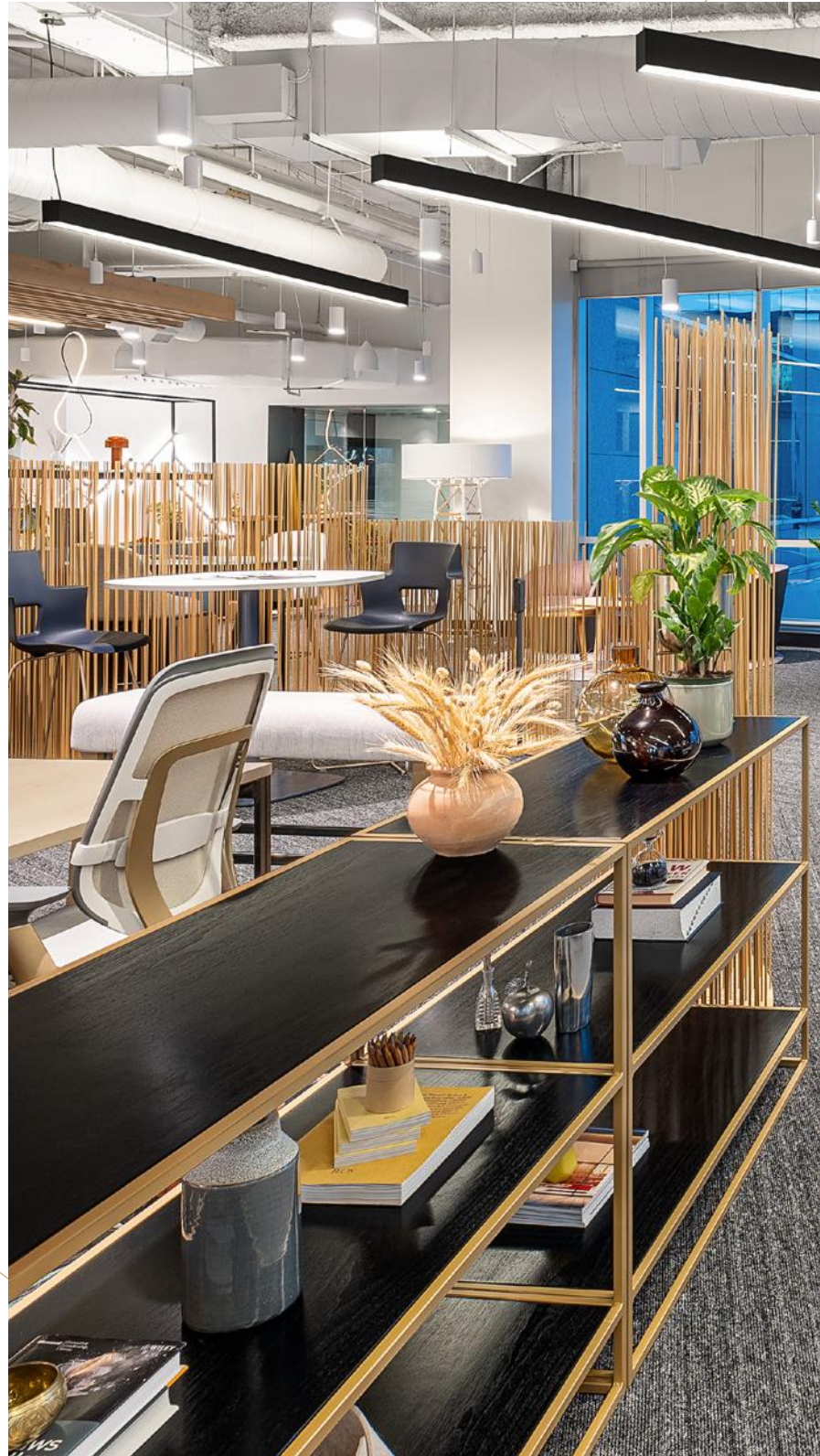
The Data-Driven Workspace + You

At POI, there is a firm belief in the transformative power of data to create workspaces that not only foster creativity, productivity, and well-being but also, create spaces people want to go to. The strategy for developing a data-driven workspace transcends mere data collection; it involves the active application of these insights to enhance spaces and empower individuals. This dedication helps anticipate and meet customer needs, aiding in the creation of workplaces that resonate deeply with their teams.

Applying Data Insights Internally

The entire spectrum of the LivingLAB operations is shaped by relentless data collection and analysis. Data spans from ergonomic assessments to employee satisfaction surveys, meticulously analyzing how spaces are utilized. This process encompasses tracking workspace utilization, monitoring environmental factors such as lighting and noise, and evaluating the effectiveness of various layouts in fostering productivity and collaboration.

Changes are implemented based on actual user feedback and observed behaviors, leading to the continuous refinement of the work environment. This proactive approach not only ensures a state-of-the-art workspace but also fosters a culture of ongoing improvement. A well planned and intentional, flexible workplace accommodates both micro and macro changes, allowing for adjustments big and small with minimal downtime and cost. These flexible workspaces allow for



macro changes, such as reconfiguring entire neighbourhoods or expanding collaboration areas, and micro changes, like repositioning workstations or adding new technology, to be seamlessly integrated into the workspace.

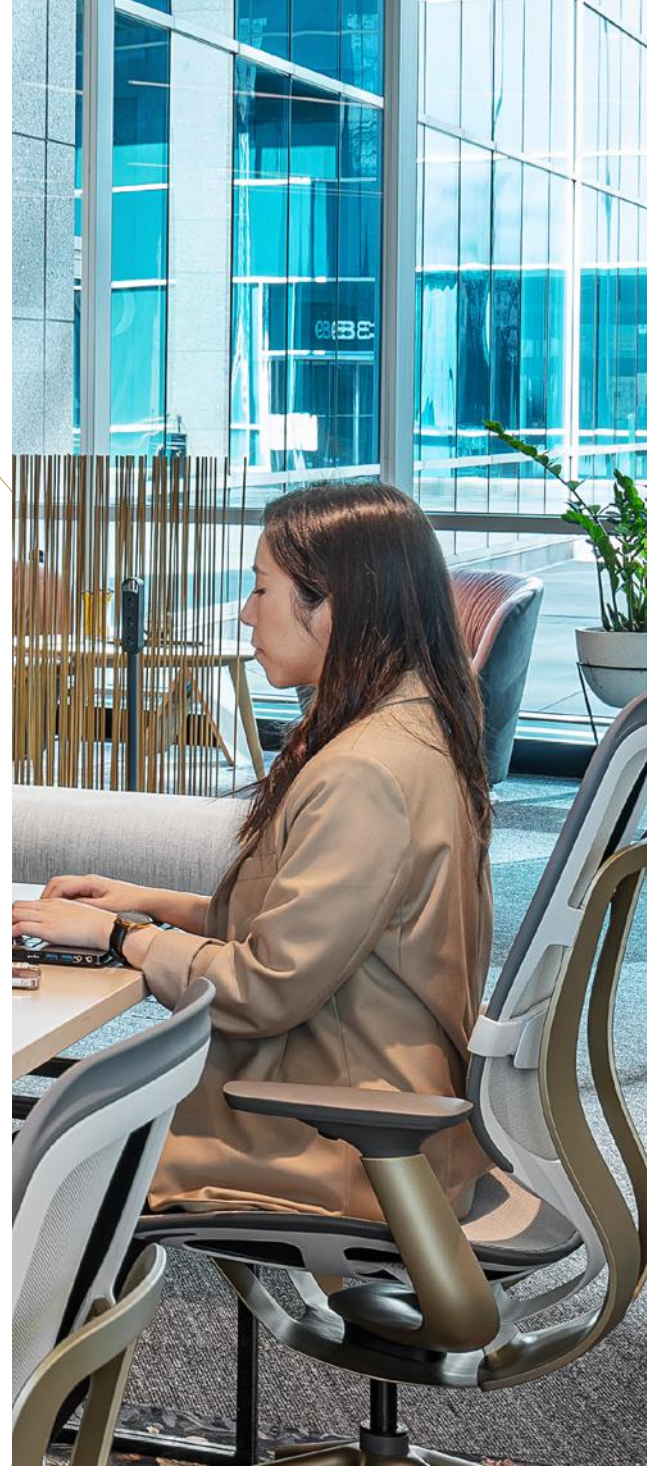
This flexibility ensures that the workspace adapts to the evolving needs of the business and its people. These internal modifications serve as a testbed for concepts that can be effectively applied in solutions tailored for clients.

Sharing Insights and Empowering Customers

Insights derived from these data-driven practices are not confined within company walls; they form the foundation of the consultancy services offered to clients. Understanding the dynamics of POI's own spaces provides a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities inherent in diverse workplace models. This evidence-based approach ensures that recommendations are not merely theoretical but grounded in practical, real-world efficacy.

POI's mission extends beyond optimizing internal work environments; it seeks to empower other businesses to achieve similar successes. By equipping clients with the tools, knowledge, and insights gained from data-driven practices, they are supported not just to envision but to actualize workspaces that are adaptable, efficient, and conducive to their organizational goals.

Whether it involves reconfiguring layouts, selecting appropriate technology, or creating flexible environments, POI guides clients through every step, ensuring they can create a workspace that genuinely works for them.



Why We Work

Rethinking the Purpose of Our Spaces

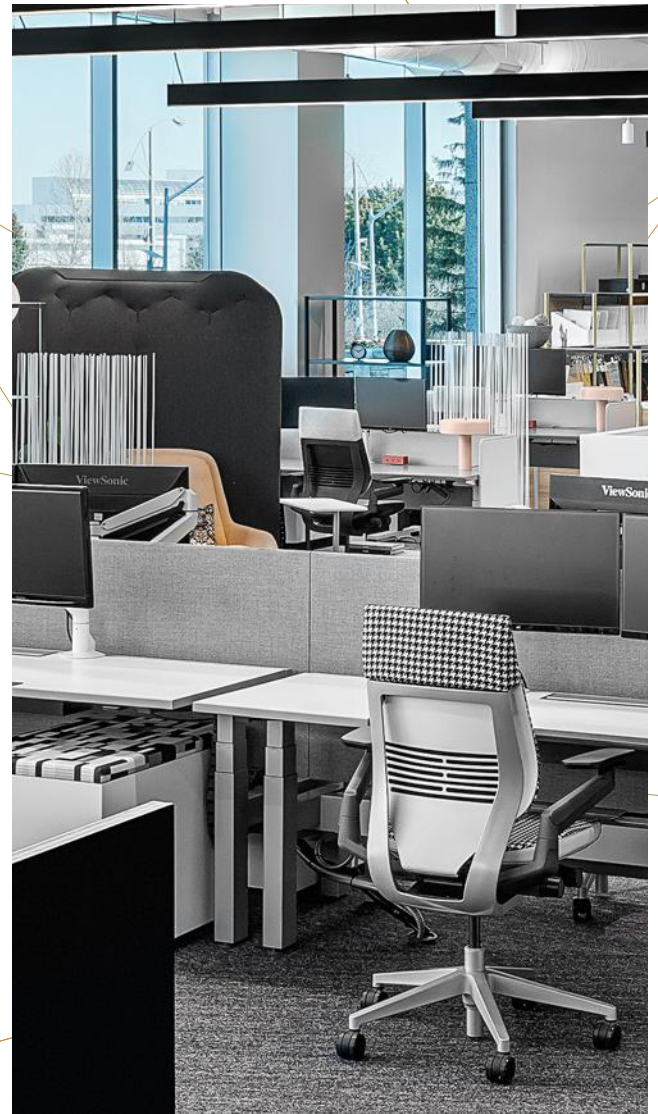
POI is proud to be the home of the LivingLAB, a pioneering space that redefines traditional office concepts. Moving beyond the typical notion of a 'showroom, the LivingLAB embodies a dynamic and inspiring workspace, setting new standards for modern work environments. Here, the office transcends the standard array of desks and ergonomic chairs—it's a place where the clock-in, clock-out routine is replaced by a culture of engagement and innovation.

The LivingLAB is designed not just to accommodate employees but to collaborate with them, fostering an environment where everyone feels they contribute to something larger. This sense of belonging and purpose is vital; it empowers individuals to make decisions that benefit themselves, their teams, and the business at large.

Why We Work is a question that echoes through the corridors of our daily lives as we fall into our routines without considering the why of what makes up these routines. At the LivingLAB, we answer this question by creating a workspace that not only functions efficiently but also inspires and motivates. It's about embracing both the small details and the big picture, ensuring our space evolves with the needs of those who inhabit it.

In this way, Why We Work becomes more than a question—it's a declaration of how our space effectively supports and enhances the work lives of our people.

**why
we
work.**



Photos by Steve Tsai



POI

inspired work. inspired life™