

Meeting Spaces to Support Hybrid Work

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Accelerated by the pandemic, *Work From Anywhere* has been embraced by organizations of all types, sizes and industries around the globe.

Yet for all the advantages distributed work creates—freedom to live anywhere, flexibility for better work/life integration, limitless talent pools—it also brings new challenges.

Among the most challenging aspects is also one of the most essential elements of a Thriving Workplace: creating effective “phygital” collaborative spaces that cross the divide between the physical and digital to support hybrid work, allowing both in-person and remote teammates to connect, meet, ideate, share and otherwise engage.

But with so much complexity, how can you design collaboration spaces that support that type of work?

This *Hybrid Meeting Space Guide* captures a range of insights we’ve gained from our ongoing research into work, workplace and new ways to meet and collaborate, supplemented with knowledge gained from our continuing client engagements.

We have taken these insights and translated them into a series of tips and best practices.

This guide is designed to share what we have learned and help you design meeting spaces that enable your people to collaborate efficiently and effectively regardless of their location.

74%

of companies plan to shift some of their employees to remote working permanently
Gartner

25%

to 30% of the workforce will be working remotely from home by the end of 2021
Global Workplace Analytics

20%

of remote workers identify collaboration and communication as the biggest struggles with working remotely
Buffer

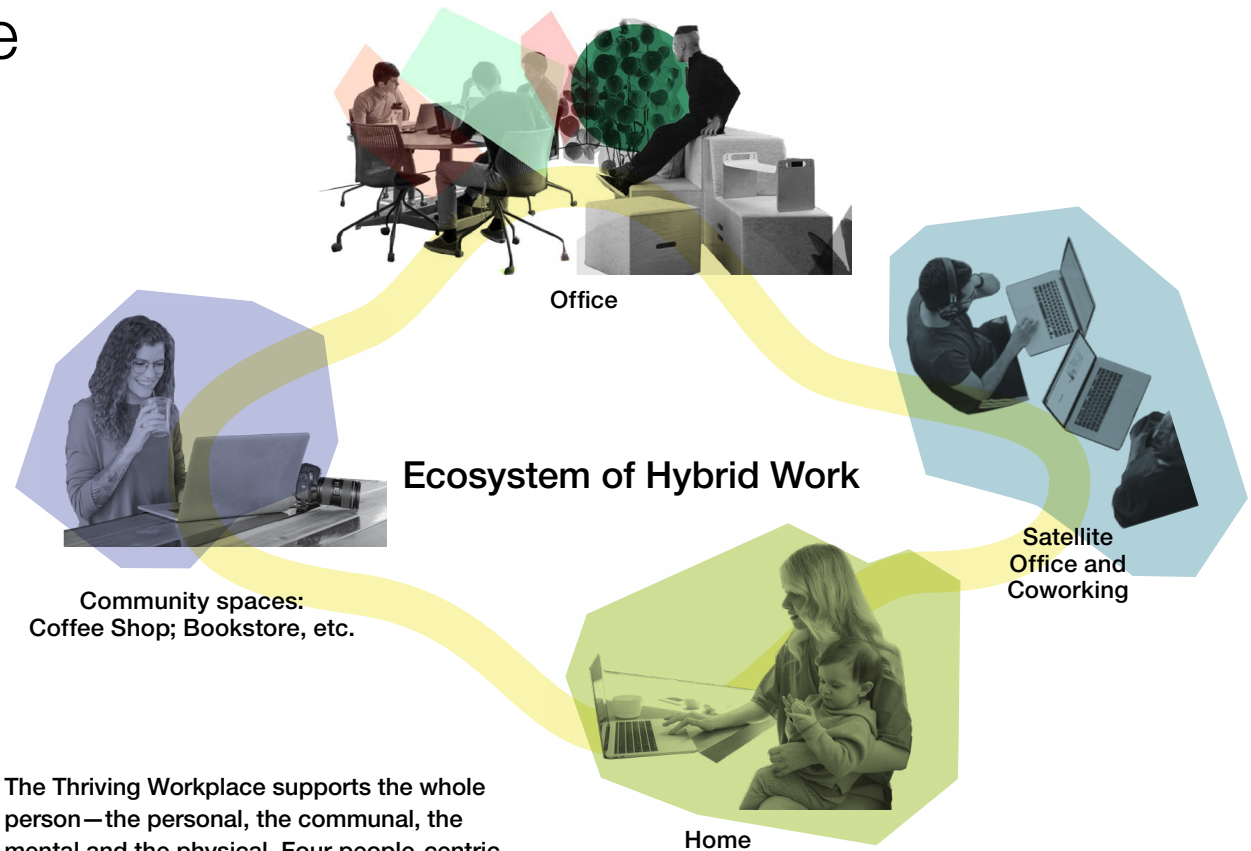
Reimagining the Workplace for a New Era of Work

The Thriving Workplace

It's the dawn of a new era. It's not "the new normal." It's what's next.

The Thriving Workplace is an opportunity to build a new, more resilient environment that:

- + "Powers" the hybrid work ecosystem
- + Delivers a cultural hub
- + Embraces scalable planning
- + Offers space diversity and delineation
- + Leverages technology for phygital collaboration
- + Embodies holistic well-being



The Thriving Workplace supports the whole person—the personal, the communal, the mental and the physical. Four people-centric characteristics embody that holistic experience:

Togetherness

Environments that have a sense of belonging, providing opportunities for people to facilitate conversation, join together to solve problems, share content, be social and enjoy the benefits of learning from one another.

Restoration

Thoughtful settings that feed and restore people, away from hectic noise, with access to fresh air, near natural light, surrounded by nature and with products that ergonomically support their work.

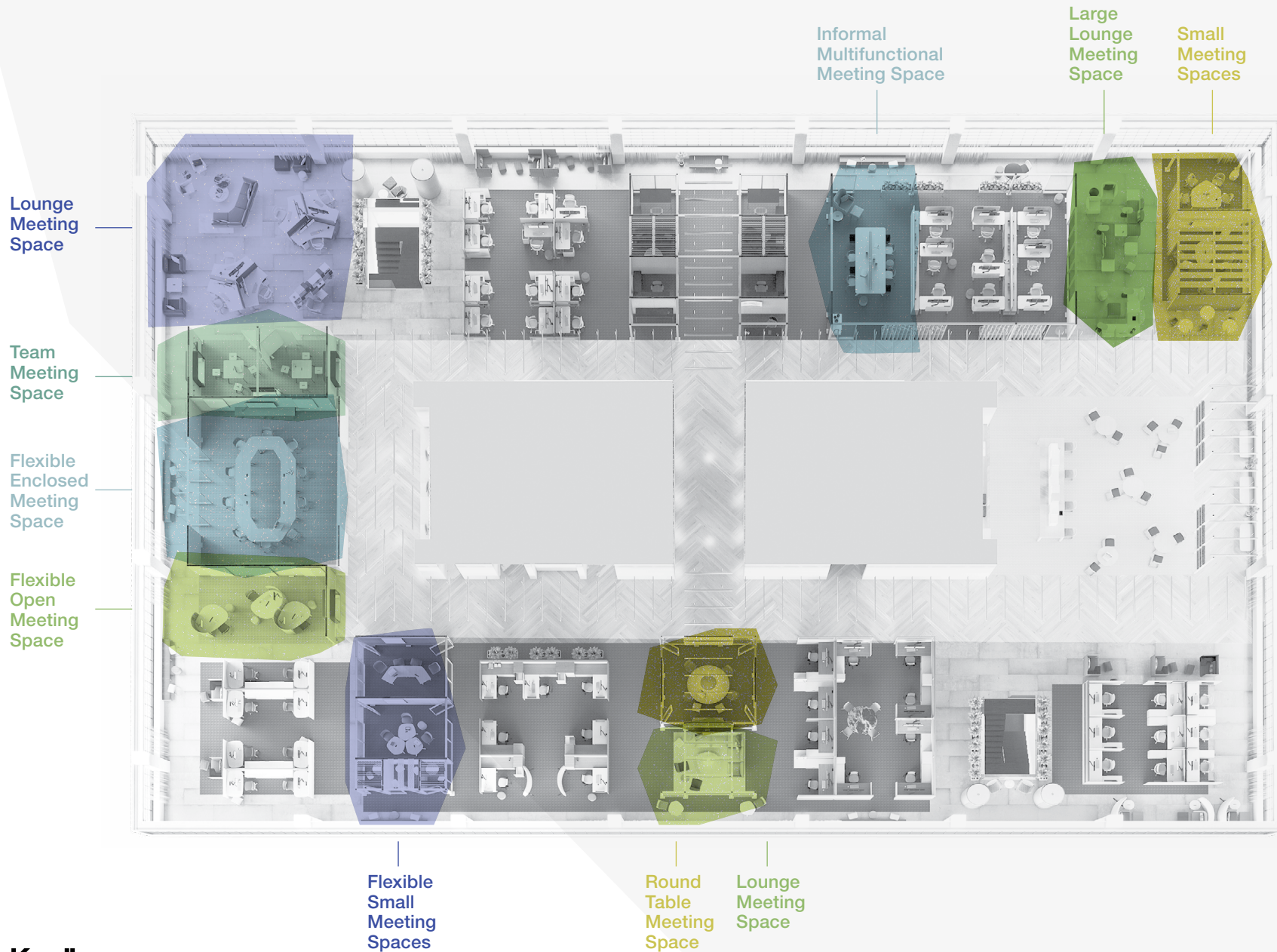
Equity

Planning optimized to support a broad range of diversity and inclusion, creating a more respectful place built on empathy and fairness across a breadth of physical and virtual engagements.

Latitude

Settings that offer ample space for individuals and teams to freely move through different interactions and activities over the course of time, and with furnishings that respond and adapt.

Hybrid Meeting Spaces are an Important Part of a Thriving Workplace





Creating Successful Hybrid Meeting Spaces

Key Ingredients for Hybrid Meeting Spaces

Successful meetings that support phygital work provide an equitable experience for all attendees—remote and in-person—in a setting that promotes participation, enables knowledge-sharing, encourages collaboration and supports the meeting’s goal.

Three key elements comprise an effective hybrid strategy:

Space

Thoughtfully equipped environments designed to support in-person and remote interactions

- + Spaces that support the workflow and range of activities of onsite participants while enhancing collaboration with offsite attendees
- + Furniture that suits room size to optimize viewing by all participants
- + Furnishings and architectural elements that enhance acoustics and visuals
- + Analog collaboration tools such as whiteboards and tack boards that can be used and seen by all participants

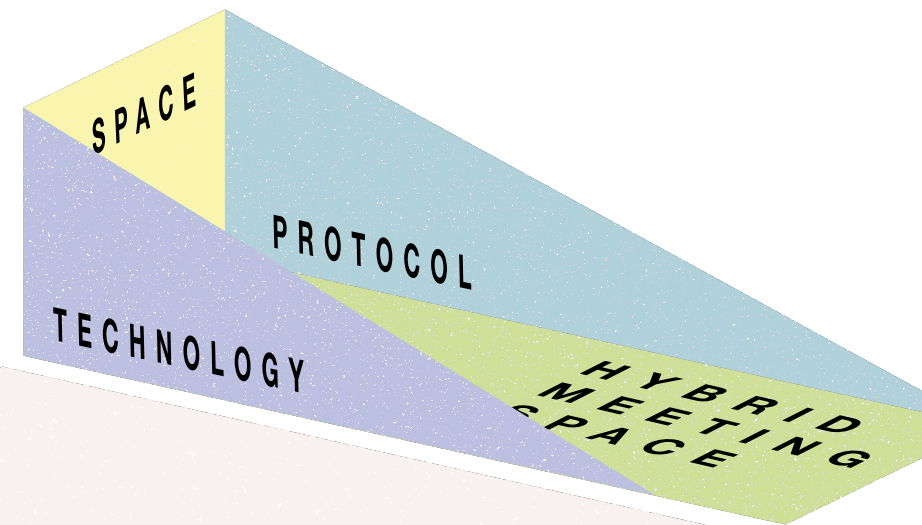
Technology

Technology that facilitates connection and collaboration

- + Seamless connectivity
- + Convenient power access
- + Simple and reliable devices and platforms to share content
- + Clear audio and visual for all participants

Protocol

People-focused policies and procedures that clearly articulate meeting expectations and etiquette for all users



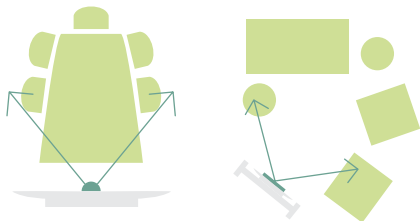
Space

The most suitable setting

There is no one-size-fits-all hybrid meeting space. To support today's phygital collaboration, hybrid spaces must be designed to accommodate a variety of interactions and activities, all while facilitating connection with remote participants. Some considerations:

- + A range of sizes and furniture set-ups
- + Walls or other furniture-as-architecture (planters, file cabinets, power stations) that delineate space within a larger setting
- + Varying levels of enclosure, including ceiling and walls, depending on levels of privacy needed (auditory, visual, confidentiality)
- + Spaces generous enough to accommodate not only furniture and technology, but also gathering and movement of onsite participants

Learn more about how [Rockwell Unscripted Creative Wall](#) can define spaces that cultivate community and collaboration.



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Furniture that fits

In order to work equally well for in-person and remote participants, hybrid settings must be designed to provide a rich video and auditory experience for those on and off site. Furniture choice and placement are key ingredients in supporting the overall experience.

Furniture should suit room/space size and be configured to optimize viewing by all participants. Some considerations:

- + A certain amount of distance is required to take full advantage of a camera's field of view. Tapered or rounded tables can help fit more people within the camera's view (*See Additional Considerations for more information*)
- + Fanned out seating also allows attendees to more easily view the monitor past each other
- + In spaces with multiple smaller tables or in casual meeting areas with lounge seating, a display cart can provide users the ability to arrange spaces to suit their needs

Tools that facilitate

While seamless technology—reliable devices, convenient power and ubiquitous connectivity—is the heart of a hybrid meeting strategy, analog tools have a place as well. Consider equipping spaces with materials to support onsite meeting participants as they engage with their remote counterparts.

- + Mobile markerboards (on a cart or a movable wall)
- + Tackable or magnetic boards
- + Carts that ferry technology, supplies and/or snacks

Ambiance that enriches

Furnishings and architectural elements should enhance acoustics and visibility by onsite and remote attendees.

Lighting

Light should be evenly distributed without shadows. Natural, diffused lighting is the most flattering. Try to avoid hard lights coming from a single direction, particularly above, as that can leave faces in unflattering shadows. Also consider:

- + **Background:** A neutral background, like gray, provides the best environment for video calls
- + **Reflectivity:** Cameras can pick up glare which can be distracting. Avoid highly reflective surfaces such as glass and brightly-colored worksurfaces in phygital meeting spaces.

Sound

Material types used for room construction and furniture have the largest effect on room acoustics. To improve audio quality for in-person and virtual attendees, fill the room with as many sound-absorbing surfaces as possible, such as upholstered panels and seating, textile window treatments and ceiling baffles.

Learn more about [KnollTextiles](#) and [FilzFelt](#) solutions for acoustic management.



Technology

Displays

- + Small meeting spaces can be adequately equipped with a single flat-panel display. If space permits, two monitors allow one to show meeting content and the other to show virtual attendees. Consider stacking them vertically with the camera in between.
- + Consider a monitor at least the width of the table so everyone at the table can view the monitor.

Cameras

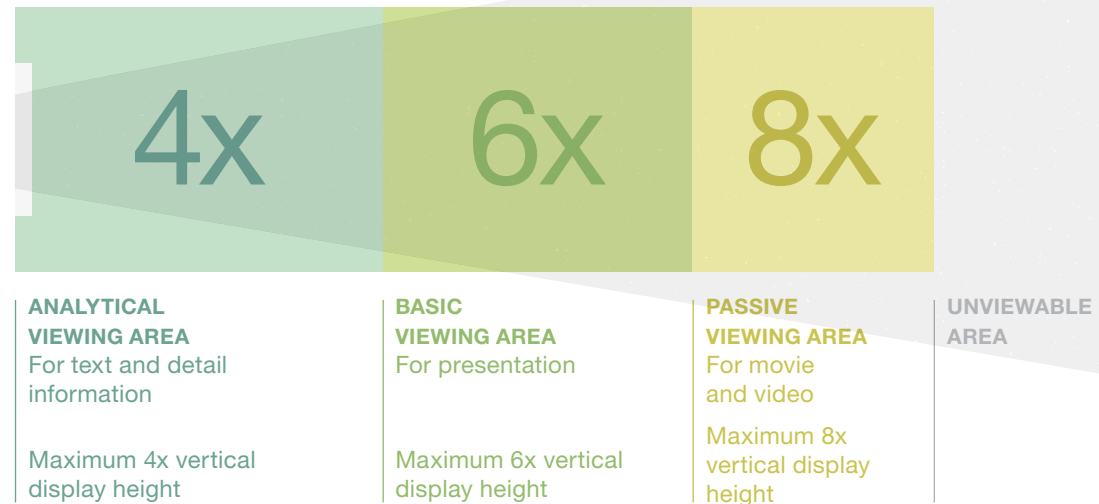
- + Mount camera as close to eye-height as possible to promote natural interaction.
- + Choose a camera appropriate to the activities and space configuration.

Microphones

- + Microphones should cover the entire area to allow virtual attendees to hear every in-person attendee effectively. Clear audio is the most important consideration for virtual attendees.
- + Conference room microphones come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Fitting the right microphone to the space can enhance speech while reducing noise.

Other

- + Access to power should be convenient for all onsite participants. Consider equipping and/or locating work tables, side and occasional tables and lounge seating with power sources within easy reach.
- + Plan for hardware that seamlessly integrates your software platform so meetings can be started with the touch of a button.
- + Collaboration tools—such as physical and virtual whiteboards—should be easily accessible and usable for all participants (See *Additional Considerations for more information*).



The 4/6/8 rule for screen size establishes that ideal viewing distance should be four, six or eight times the height of the screen depending on whether viewing is analytical, basic or passive.



The signal-to-noise ratio is greatly affected by the distance from the person talking to the microphone. In most cases, the background noise in a conference room is pretty consistent throughout the space. The signal level, on the other hand, falls off significantly as the distance from the person's mouth increases.

Protocol

Beyond the physical, people-focused policies and procedures can make or break a successful hybrid meeting.

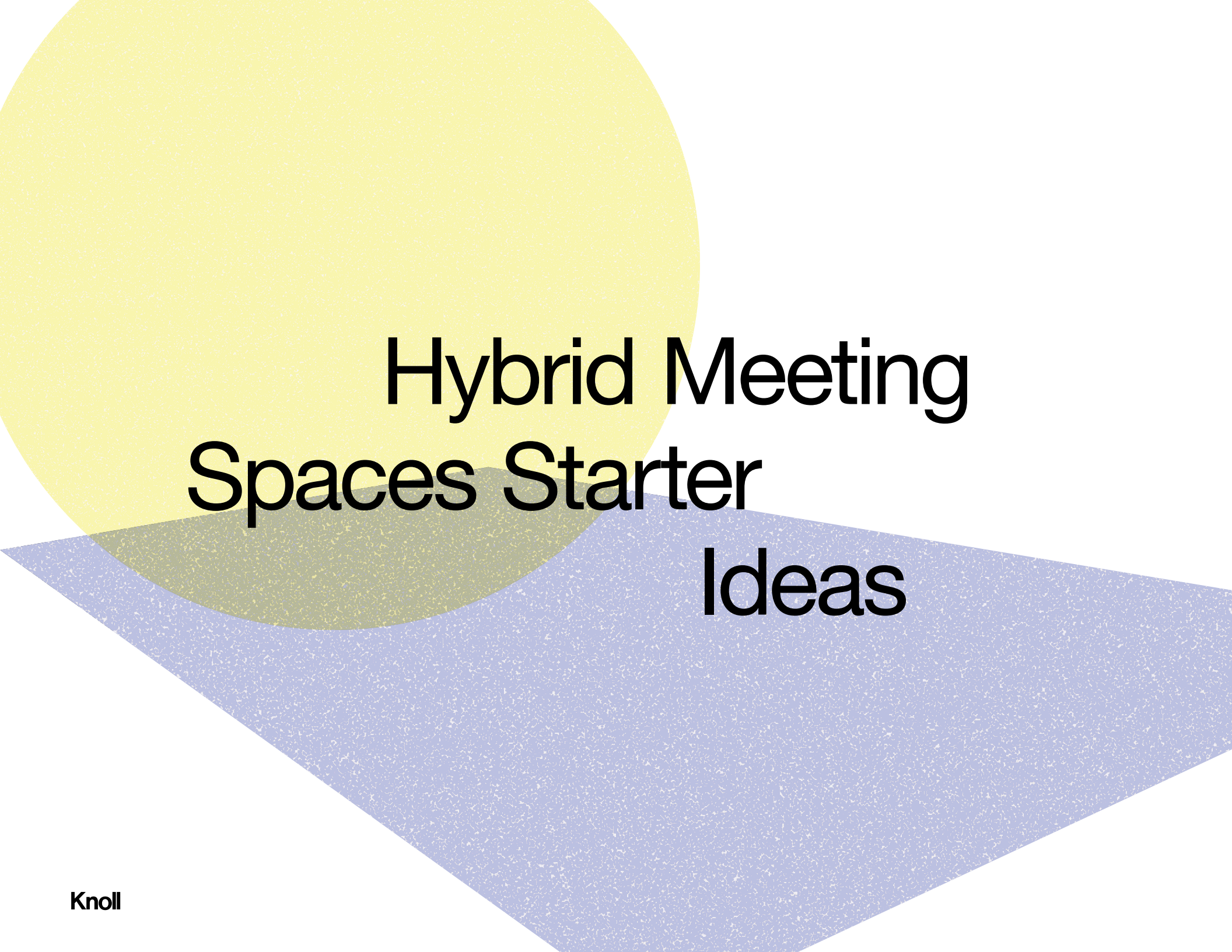
Establish protocol that aligns with your company culture to streamline meetings.

- + Meeting purpose must be clearly articulated
 - + Agendas are mandatory
 - + Content should be shared and reviewed in advance
-

Develop and circulate etiquette guidelines and practices that ensure a positive and equitable experience for all.

- + Avoid side conversations onsite that remote participants can't hear
- + Schedule meetings that end 10 minutes before the hour to allow for room cleanup and people to transition to their next event
- + Turn off all notifications and silence cell phones
- + Leave time for casual conversation among all participants, remote and onsite
- + Make efforts to include introverts, especially if they are remote, in the discussion
- + Host the meeting in a room designed for the number of in-person attendees and make sure all remote team members can hear the information



The background features a large, semi-transparent yellow circle in the upper left and a blue triangle pointing upwards from the bottom left, partially overlapping the circle.

Hybrid Meeting Spaces Starter Ideas

Informal Multifunctional Meeting Space

Meeting space, Team area,
Hoteling space

6–20 people
in person

Designed for informal team
meetings and presentations,
drop-in work

Interactions and Activities Supported

- + Informal team meetings
- + Presentations
- + Working alone but around others
- + Town halls

Design Considerations

- + Large table with generous work area to flex from meeting to individual work area
- + Upholstered wall for privacy, space delineation, sound attenuation
- + Textile window treatments to control glare and for sound attenuation
- + Diffused lighting so participants are visible on screen

Technology + Tools Considerations

- + Large wall-mounted monitor for group display
- + 360° or videobar camera (depending on most common use of space)
- + Linked individual microphones or linked speakerphones to capture sound from all in-person participants
- + Additional technology cart with secondary mobile monitor to pull in for larger gatherings
- + Individual laptops
- + Power at surface for convenient recharging
- + Collaborative software

Featured: Rockwell Unscripted® Creative Wall®,
Library Table and Steps; Muuto Visu Chairs;
Muuto Ambit Rail Lamps



Flexible Enclosed Meeting Space

Conference Room,
Training room

6–10 people
in person

Designed for group work and
presentations

Interactions and Activities Supported

- + Presentations
- + Team updates
- + Knowledge-sharing
- + Brainstorming new ideas
- + Co-creating with others

Design Considerations

- + Freestanding walls for privacy, space delineation, sound attenuation
- + Movable tables and chairs for flexibility and easy reconfiguration
- + Light task seating designed for medium-term duration
- + Glass doors which allow in natural light, reducing fatigue in longer meetings
- + Whiteboards and tackboards to support onsite collaboration
- + Adjacent seating, outside the room, for breakouts and taking calls
- + Storage for technology and tools and to support hospitality needs

Technology + Tools Considerations

- + Multiple large monitors to support group viewing from a variety of points in the space
- + 360° camera on mobile cart that can be positioned to capture sound and visuals of participants around the room; also consider using individual laptop cameras to capture facial expressions if the room set up is distributed
- + Linked individual microphones or linked speakerphones to capture sound from all in-person participants
- + Power at surface for convenient recharging
- + Collaborative software

Featured: Rockwell Unscripted® Creative Wall®; Pixel™ Table Collection and Storage; Ollo® chairs



Team Meeting Space

Scrum Room, Team Room

Designed for interactive collaboration

4–10 people
in person

Interactions and Activities Supported

- + Project-based team work
- + Brainstorming new ideas
- + Co-creating with others

Design Considerations

- + Tackable area and whiteboards for ideation
- + Expandable mobile wall to offer privacy, space delineation, whiteboard
- + Short-term storage, such as hooks, as well as dedicated storage for short or long-term projects
- + Standing-height table on casters and movable stools to promote less structured gatherings and provide a landing for personal laptops/phones

Technology + Tools Considerations

- + Mobile or wall-mounted monitor for group display
- + Camera mounted as close to eye level as possible
- + WiFi-enabled conference phone or bluetooth speakerphone; consider multiple linked if in-person attendees are highly mobile
- + Mobile technology cart to house monitor, camera and other team tools
- + Individual laptops
- + Collaborative software

Featured: Rockwell Unscripted® Creative Wall®, Easy Tables, Easy Stools, Media Cart and Mobile Markerboard; Muuto Dots



Round Table Meeting Space

Touchdown Space,
Huddle Room

Designed for small gatherings

2–6 people
in person

Interactions and Activities Supported

- + Project work
- + Informal meetings
- + Working alone around others

Design Considerations

- + Round table to signal equity for all attendees
- + Upholstered wall to offer privacy, space delineation and sound attenuation
- + Multiple room entry points to allow for quick huddles
- + Tackable, magnetic and/or whiteboard walls for ideation
- + Overhead lighting to add an element of comfort and sound absorption
- + Light task seating with casters for short to medium-term comfort
- + Small storage for technology and tools

Technology + Tools Considerations

- + Wall-mounted or mobile monitor for group display
- + 360° camera positioned in center of table or individual laptop cameras
- + If microphone is not integrated into camera, speakerphone or conference phone
- + Power at surface for convenient recharging
- + Collaborative software

Featured: Rockwell Unscripted® Creative Wall®, Sawhorse Table and Credenza; Ollio® chairs; Muuto Under the Bell Pendant Lamp



Flexible Small Meeting Space

Touchdown Space,
Huddle Room, Video Room

2–4 people
in person

Designed for quick check-ins,
short team meetings, video calls

Interactions and Activities Supported

- + Video calls
- + Project work
- + Informal meetings

Design Considerations

- + Individual, grouped tables for personal space and group work
- + Bar-height chairs for less structured interactions
- + Upholstered wall to offer privacy, space delineation and sound attenuation
- + Tackable, magnetic and/or whiteboard walls for ideation
- + Additional touchdown seating for impromptu collaboration

Technology + Tools Considerations

- + Wall-mounted monitor for group display
- + Videobar or 120°+ camera with integrated microphone, mounted by display as close to eye-height as possible
- + Power at surface for convenient recharging
- + Collaborative software

Featured: Rockwell Unscripted® Creative Wall® and Upholstered Seats; Islands Collection by Knoll® X-Base Tables; Muuto Oslo Counter Stools



Lounge Meeting Space

Touchdown Space, Video Room

1–3 people
in person

Designed for quick check-ins,
individual focus work, video calls

Interactions and Activities Supported

- + Video calls
- + Project status updates
- + Informal meetings
- + Webinars
- + Individual focus work

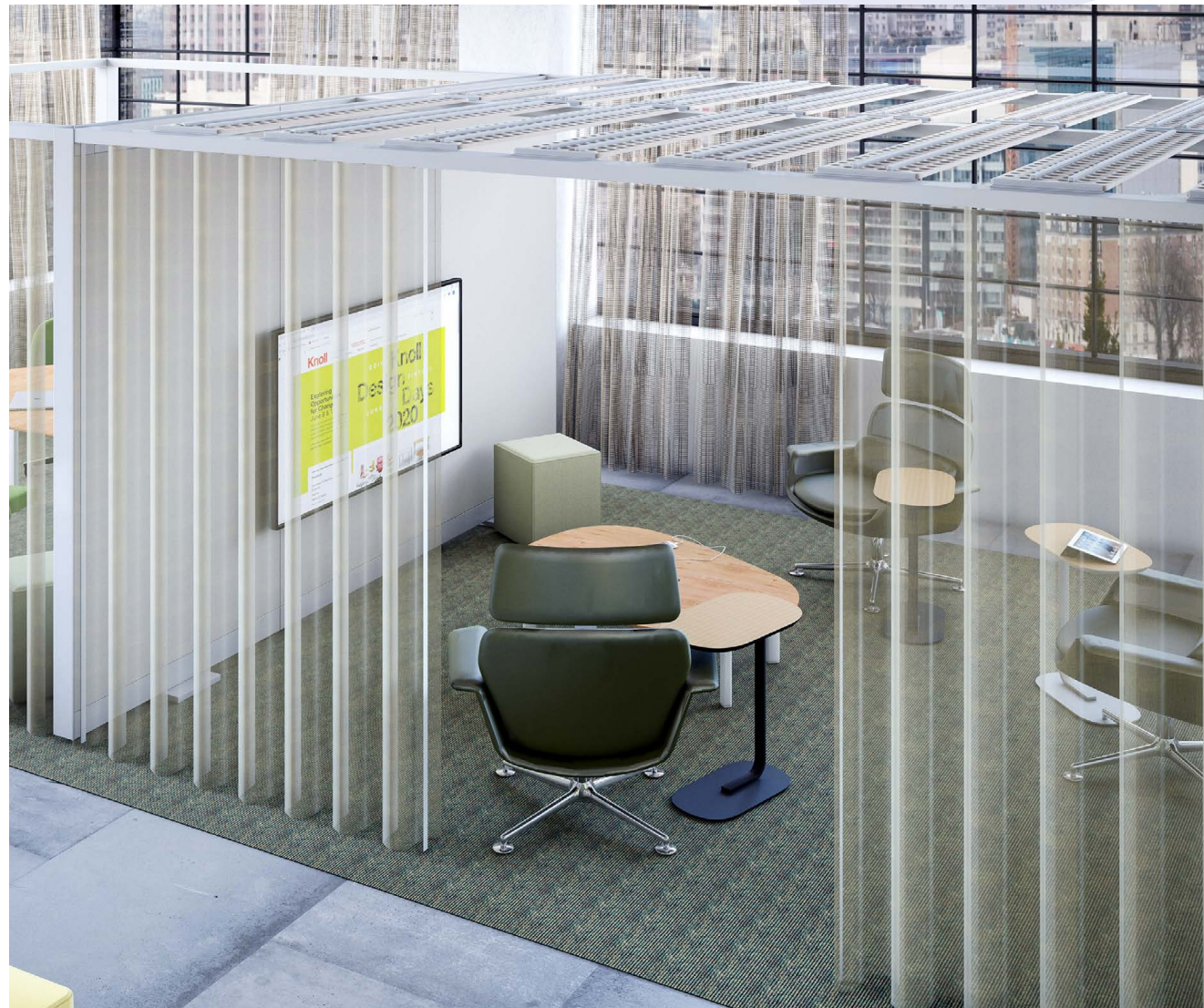
Design Considerations

- + Lounge chair on a rotating base for moving between screen content and in-person activities
- + Individual pull-up tables for personal laptops/phones
- + Occasional table for materials, food, drink
- + Upholstered wall to offer privacy, space delineation and sound attenuation
- + Drapery to control glare, attenuate sound
- + Additional touchdown seating for impromptu collaboration

Technology + Tools Considerations

- + Wall-mounted monitor for group display
- + Videobar or 120°+ camera with integrated microphone, mounted by display as close to eye-height as possible
- + Microphone on camera
- + Shared power in occasional table
- + Individual laptops/devices
- + Collaborative software

Featured: Islands Collection by Knoll® SL-Base table; KN™ High Back Lounge Chairs; Muuto Relate Side Tables



Additional Considerations

Spaces & Furnishings

While the majority of in-person meetings have four or fewer participants, some phygital meeting spaces may need to be designed to flex to meet a range of needs.

Adaptable elements allow a space to support multiple types of gatherings and adapt from few to many participants.

- + Whiteboards, mobile or wall-mounted, support a meeting that turns from presentation to brainstorm
- + Additional touchdown seating accommodates impromptu interactions, short-term guests or multifunctional spaces
- + Technology carts support an expanded number of participants in a space by allowing for quick additional monitors and cameras
- + Linked speakerphones or individual microphones can scale up or down depending on number of attendees
- + Movable walls and partitions can sub-divide larger spaces when not in use
- + Mobile tables allow a multitude of space setups, whether grouped or pulled apart



Cameras

When it comes to cameras, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Make your choice based on the size of the room, number of people, the furniture layout and activities taking place.

Straight-On Cameras (90° and less)

Features

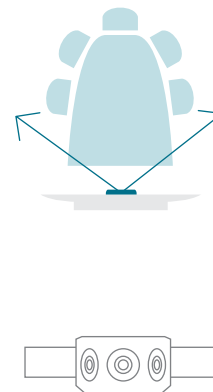
- + High definition up to 4k
- + Intelligent tracking
- + Zoom, pan and tilt control
- + No distortion of space due to narrow field of view
- + Small footprint



120°–180° Cameras

Features

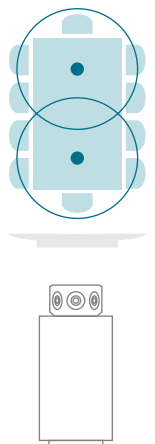
- + High definition up to 4k
- + Intelligent tracking
- + Wide field of view (120° or greater) captures all participants in a smaller space
- + Small footprint



360° Cameras

Features

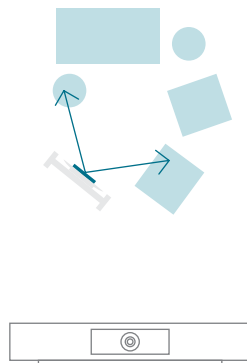
- + High definition up to 4k
- + Intelligent tracking and zoom
- + 360° field of view captures all participants around the table
- + Speaker mic integration allows for greater portability
- + Small to medium footprint; two cameras for a larger footprint



Videobars

Features

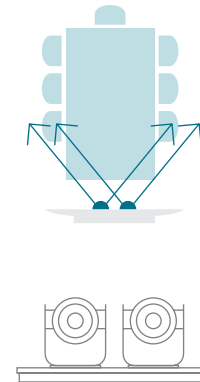
- + High definition up to 4k
- + Intelligent tracking and zoom
- + Audio and camera integrated into one product
- + Can be WiFi-enabled which allows for greater mobility
- + Medium footprint



Dual Cameras

Features

- + High definition up to 4k
- + Intelligent tracking
- + Active speaker is never minimized
- + Captures the room and active speakers simultaneously
- + Medium to large footprint



Telepresence

Features

- + High definition up to 4k
- + Audio and camera integrated into one product
- + Multiple screens for easy collaboration
- + Large footprint



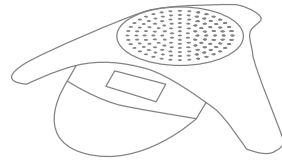
Microphones

Highly-intelligible audio is essential to successful phygital meetings. Choose a microphone solution that will pick up the speech of each in-person team member.

Conference Phones

Features

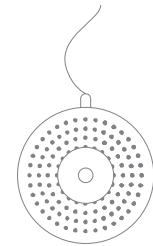
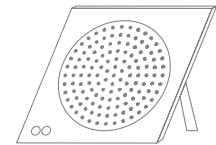
- + Traditional look and feel
- + Ease of use
- + Hardwired for consistent audio
- + WiFi-enabled option for more flexibility
- + Hardwired option for consistent audio



Speakerphones and Individual Microphones

Features

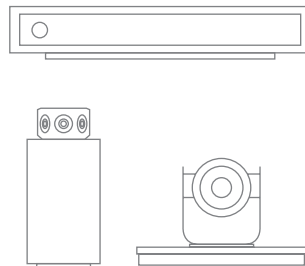
- + Small footprint
- + Portability enables mobility within a space
- + Speakerphones connect via Bluetooth and some models link for extended range
- + Individual mics can be distributed to each attendee
- + New audio-capturing technology helps cut out background noise



Integrated Camera Speakers

Features

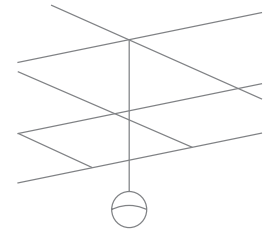
- + Audio and camera integrated into one product
- + Can be WiFi-enabled which allows for greater mobility
- + New audio-capturing technology helps cut out background noise



Ceiling Microphones

Features

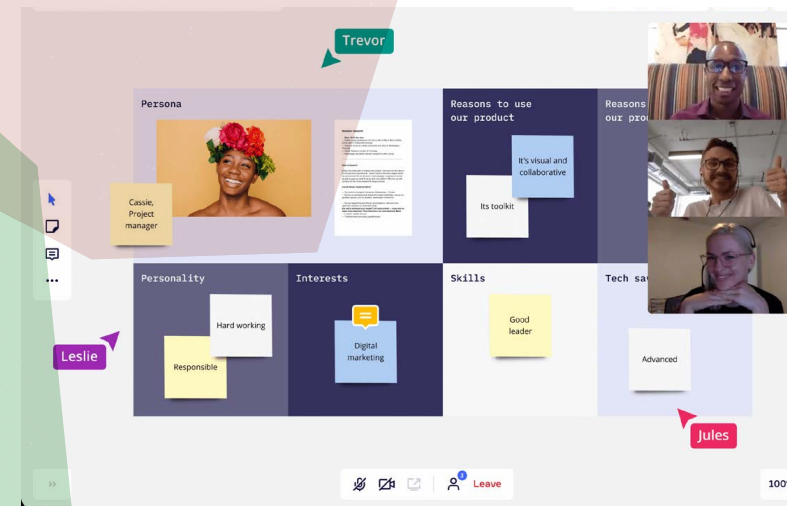
- + High clarity of voice
- + Every person around the table receives their own mic
- + Seamlessly integrated with the built environment



Collaboration Tools

Collaboration software platforms allow synchronous and asynchronous collaboration for tasks including:

- + Ideation & brainstorming
- + Research & design
- + Strategy & planning
- + Mapping & diagramming
- + Agile workflows



Google Jamboard; Miro

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To learn more about The Thriving Workplace,
visit knoll.com/thriving-workplace or contact
your local [Knoll Sales Representative](#).