

White paper

Case study: Ernst & Young



From fixed, to flex

How smart locker systems increase flexibility
and support successful dynamic workplaces

VECOS 

WORKTECH
ACADEMY



Ernst & Young, Manhattan, USA

Ernst & Young LLP (EY US) has become a frontrunner in dynamic work environments in light of the pandemic. In recognizing that flexibility is no longer a culture-driven perk, but an essential factor in employee retention, EY US re-evaluated the workplace configuration and design of its headquarters at Five Times Square in New York, NY.

The space had served EY US well for more than 20 years, but the lease was expiring, and its layout was designed for the way people worked prior to the pandemic - with a large number of cubicles and little in the way of collaborative space. EY US research during the pandemic found that companies need to create a workplace that meets the demands and expectations of the post-pandemic worker.

Functionality is key

To meet the evolving needs of both clients and EY employees, a new functional space was needed that supports flexibility and design creativity. Led by a team with representation from the business, real estate and operations, the new EY US home at One Manhattan West was structured based on the idea that when employees visit the

office, they will do so with a specific purpose in mind. It could be a meeting with team members, a client or a supervisor. Instead of a sea of cubicles, there is collaborative space that supports a more adaptable approach to how work gets done. As part of its new workplace strategy, EY US worked closely with Vecos to implement its smart locker management system. Despite the move away from fixed and allocated seating, employees still need a secure place, preferably close to where they are working, to store belongings and important materials when they are at the office. Through this system, employees can use their EY access badge at an integrated walk-up kiosk and their smartphone to control the locker they are using through integration with the EY 'My Day' workplace experience mobile application.

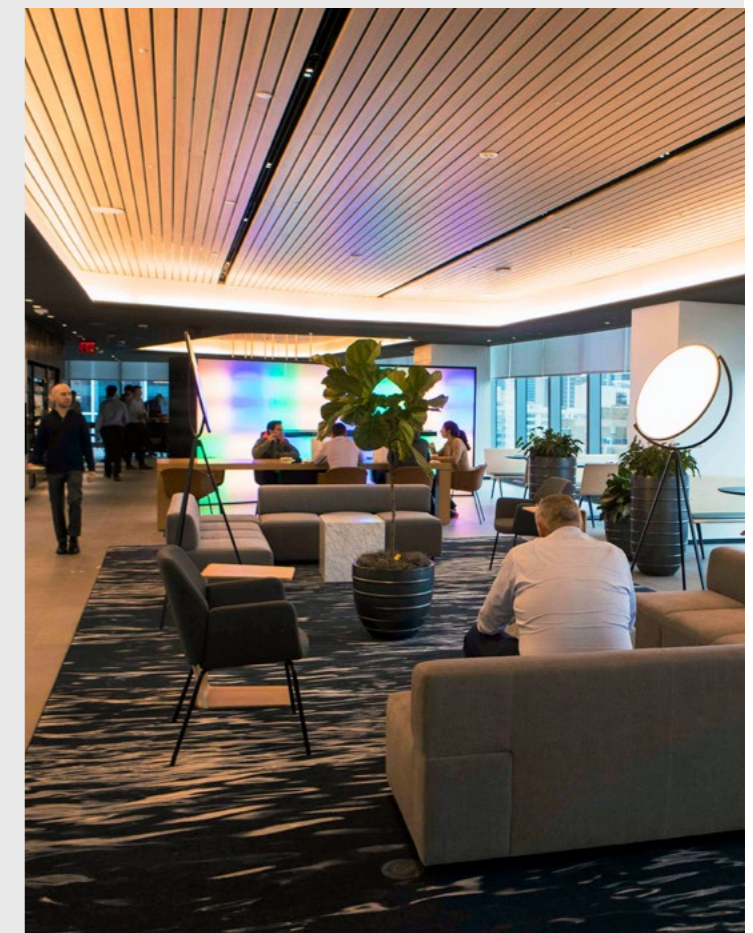
Previously, the ability of employees to get a locker close to where they would be working for the day was often a challenge. Lockers were typically assigned and would always be in one spot, regardless of work location. The Vecos smart locker system solves this problem, enabling people to get a locker wherever their workspace is for that day.

EY US views Vecos as a growing company with excellent teaming that outpaces the competition on cost and provides greater value by offering both hardware and software-as-a-service (SaaS) support. The Vecos solution is cloud-based, and its function does not require PCs or servers on premises.

EY US adheres to the standard of one locker for every two people, rather than asking more people to share space. The user experience at EY US has been positive, with individuals expressing an

interest in using lockers overnight, not just for single-use periods in the same day. This request has resulted in a policy change to a sliding 24-hour window through Saturday, if used regularly. The software-based management system dynamically adapted seamlessly to this policy change.

The decision to use only day lockers to start is based on EY US's preference that people use lockers efficiently, not as a permanent storage space for their 'stuff'. There has been little pushback to this approach. Those who do need a permanent storage option, or overnight space when events run late into the night, have been served on a case-by-case basis.



Over time, both the software as well as the automatic integrations between EY and Vecos – who now collaborate in 26 locations - have only gotten better, and no significant changes have been required for One Manhattan West. Data monitoring has been extensive but limited by the pandemic and the resulting lack of people going into the office in great numbers. Still, the lockers are being used, and their presence at One Manhattan West and ease of use are appreciated by EY personnel who need the space.

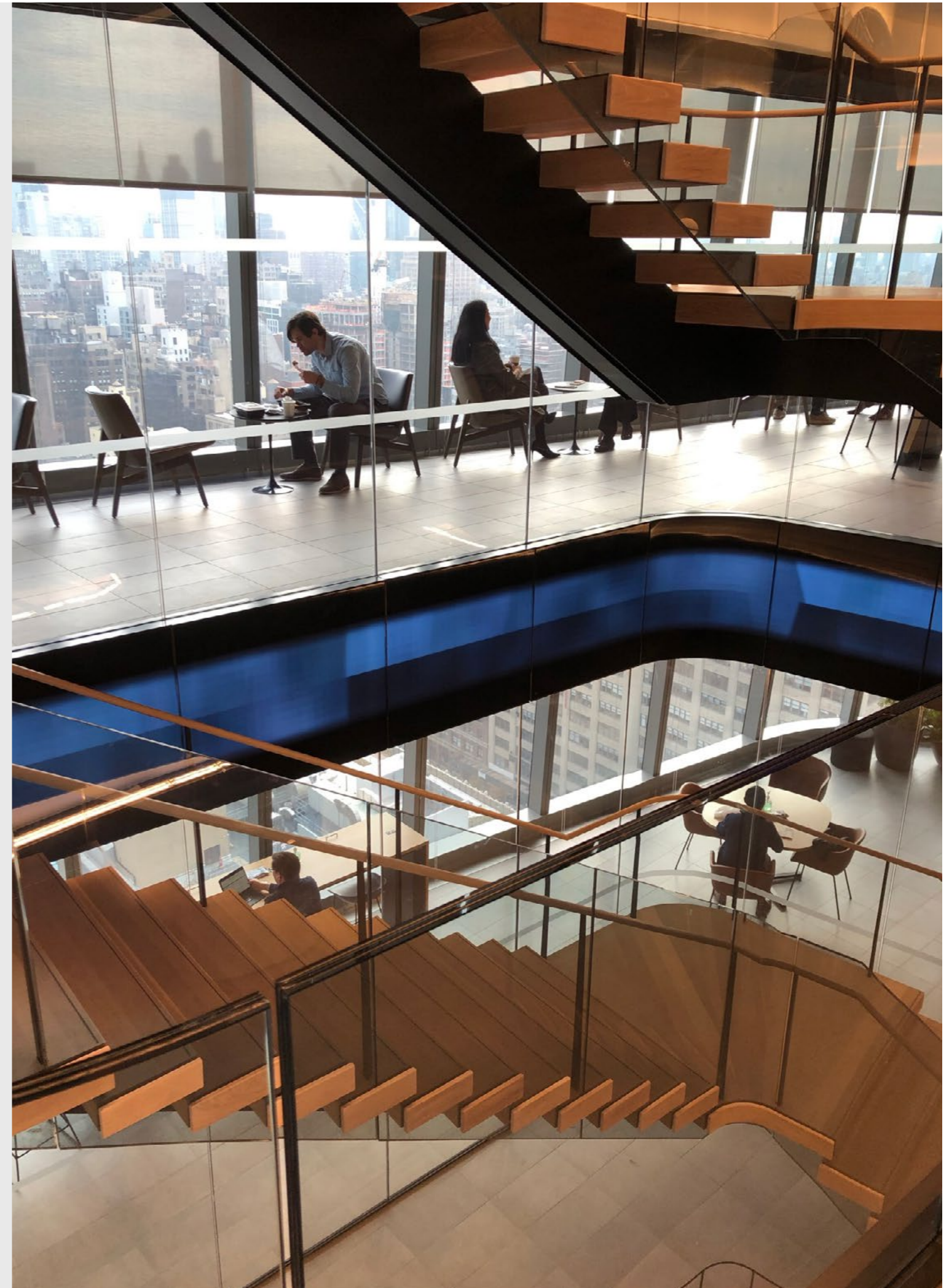
Hybrid workplace here to stay

The EY Future Workplace Index (FWI) found that 57% of business leaders have found new ways to enhance productivity under different working models. The top four factors driving this improvement, according to the FWI, are more efficient operations and processes, better employee collaboration, more effective research and development, and better management of staff.

One Manhattan West is a real-world example of EY Workplace Reimagined in action. As business leaders look to shape the office of the future, they must consider workplace strategy, sustainability, technology enablement and the employee experience.

The recent EY Work Reimagined Employee Survey 2021 found that while 79% of companies intend to make moderate to extensive hybrid work changes, only 40% have communicated their plans to their workforce. The lack of clarity has created a disconnect with employees who want flexible working arrangements. How can you drive greater efficiencies and reduce your total cost of occupancy? How can you enhance collaboration and culture in a hybrid work environment, utilizing workplace strategies and technology enablement? The EY data findings show that the hybrid workplace is here to stay. Now is the time to build a space that retains talent, promotes productivity and protects the future of business.

The views expressed by the author are not necessarily those of Ernst & Young LLP or other members of the global EY organization.



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11,000
employees



5,640
smart lockers



1
smart locker system



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The Smart Locker System